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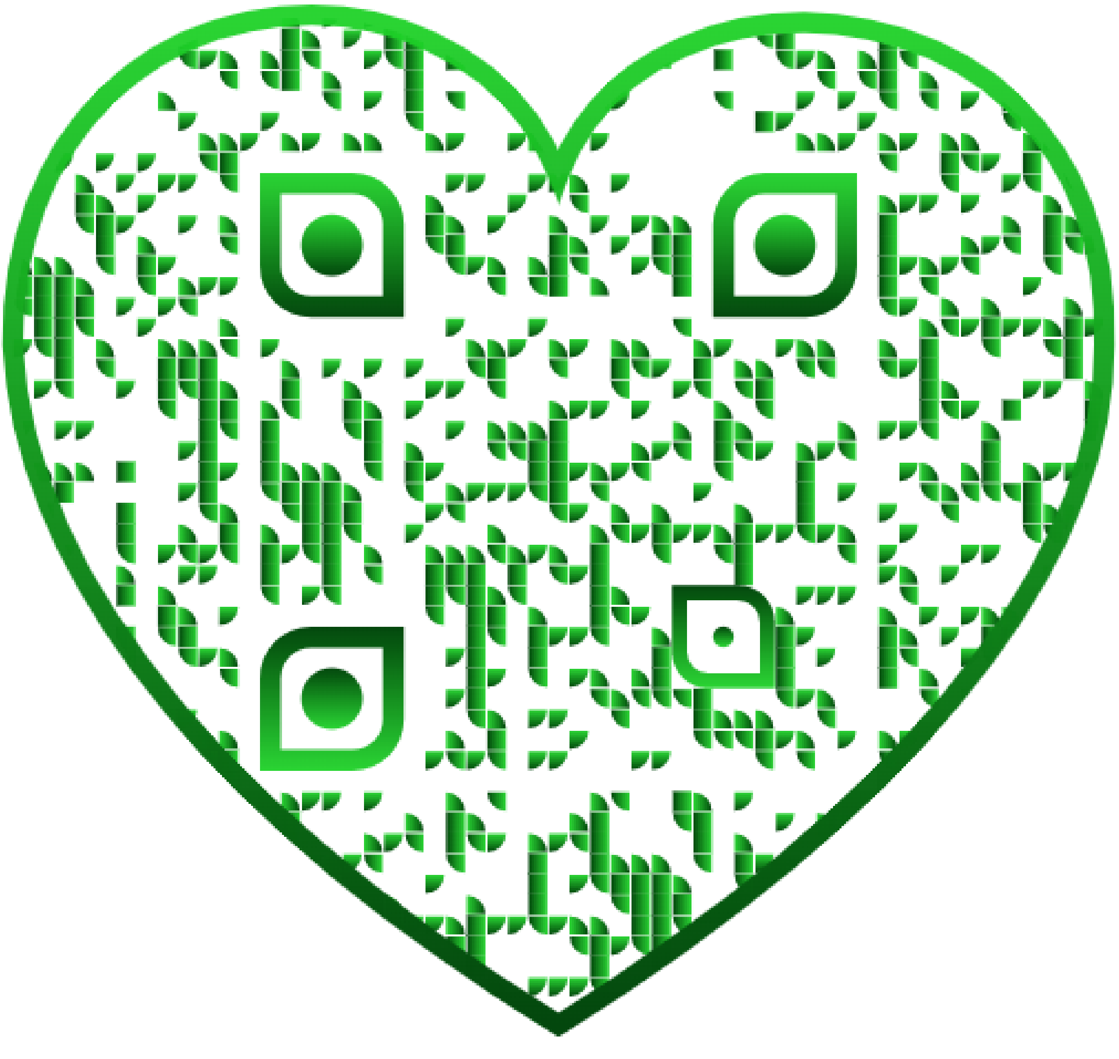

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Do your research

Christopher
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Classic PORSCHE

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NEXT ISSUE ON SALE
FRIDAY 10TH OCTOBER

GLOBAL REACH

One of the great things about Porsche is how the marque appeals to petrolheads all over the globe. Granted, worldwide appeal isn't exclusive to the Stuttgart brand, but it's something making my job so much more interesting than the editorial positions I've held on territory-specific single-marque magazines in the past. By comparison, *Classic Porsche* is something of a 'league of nations', as is conveniently demonstrated by this issue, which features cars from Canada, the USA, Germany, the United Kingdom, Hungary and Finland.

Showcasing the enthusiast scene's passion for Porsche in all four corners of the world is a hugely enjoyable pursuit, not least because it affords us the freedom to present readers with a snapshot of a different culture's way of approaching the badge, but also because of the wonderful opportunity we get to meet owners, restorers, workshop proprietors and dealers keen to indulge us in what their part of the world has to offer, both in and away from Porsche circles. It has become a bit of a cliché, but there's a saying along the lines of the Porsche scene being about its people, not its cars. In truth, it's probably an even split.

Thankfully, there is always new blood coming to the Porsche scene and there appears to be no shortage of cars to restore, personalise and — as the manufacturer intended — get out and drive, making the *Classic Porsche* editorial team's job that little bit easier than if we were focused on a marque subject to limited-volume production and owners who cosseted their cars, sticking strictly to standard specification and never allowing the odometer's scoreboard to increase.

The point about personalisation is important to note. Of course, we feature standard cars — everyone loves a historically significant Porsche in the same configuration as it left the factory, but from its earliest days, the manufacturer has always offered individual equipment to its private clients, allowing owners to tailor their cars to a number of influencing factors, including driving style. In this regard, nothing has changed, though personalisation is certainly now more prevalent. A broad church indeed.

Dan Furr Editor
@FurrsFleet

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911 Turbo (996)

Arctic Silver • Black Leather Seats
Manual Gearbox • 18″ Turbo II Wheels • Cargraphic Sports Exhaust
Fully Electric Seats • Previously Sold & Serviced by Paragon • 38,632 miles
2001 (Y)

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911 Carrera 2 S (997.2)

Meteor Grey • Black Leather Seats
PDK Gearbox • 19″ Turbo Wheels
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911 Carrera 2 S (997.2)

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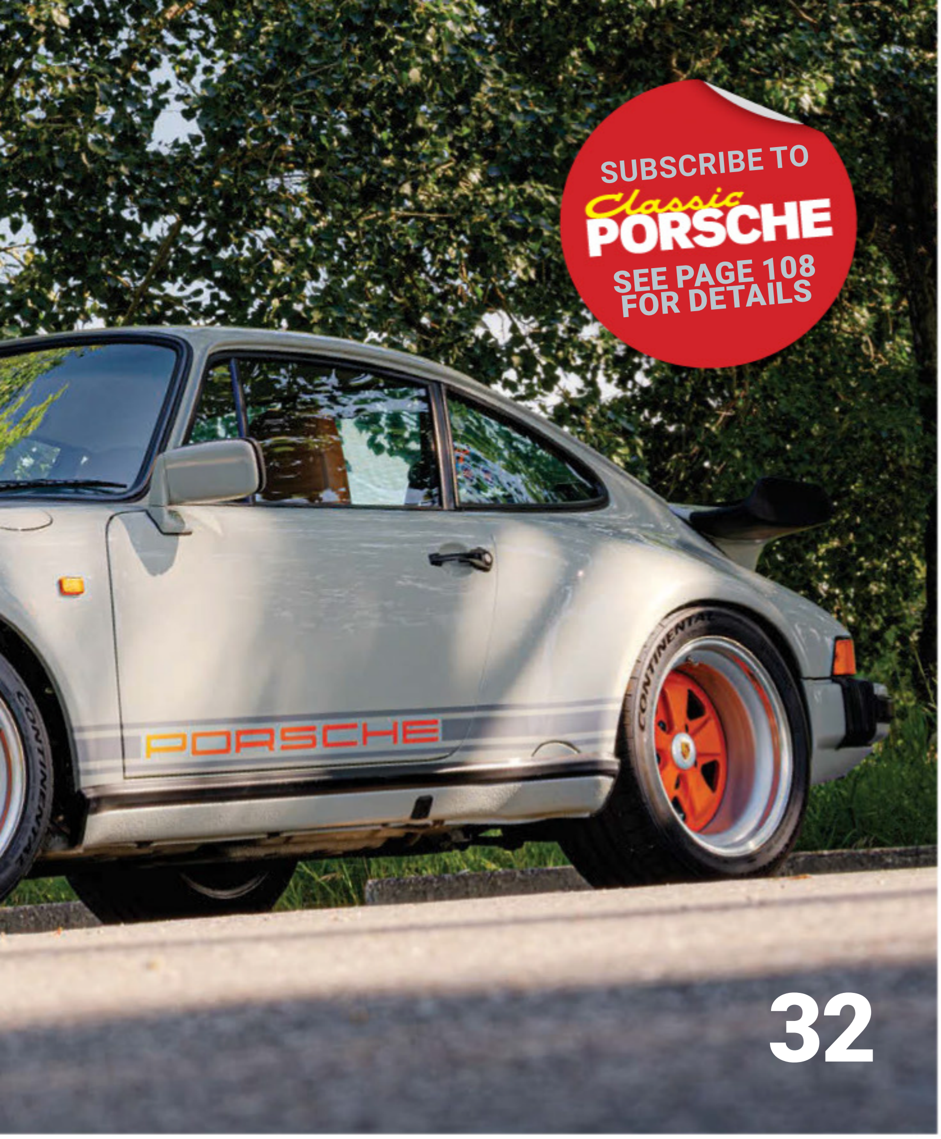

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SECOND COMING

If you want your next Porsche to be air-cooled and exhibit a high level of personalisation, Ninemeister's 9m division can deliver the goods, as demonstrated by the stunning 9m964RS...

Words **Dan Furr** Photography **Adrian Brannan**

The follow-up to the mighty Carrera RS 2.7 arrived two years into 964 production, but did this 'second coming' have any right to carry the Rennsport badge? If the requirement was to deliver feedback through every fibre of the driver's body, carry the weight of history and double down on the car's purpose, then the answer is in the affirmative. Based on the 964 Carrera 2, this was a homologation special to compete in N/GT events for the 1992 season, an effort delivering 2,276 examples of the model during a near two-year run.

> **WHEN IT COMES TO 911s, COLIN BELTON HAS AN ENCYCLOPAEDIC KNOWLEDGE OF ALL THINGS MECHANICAL AND ENGINEERING**

The 964 Carrera RS's 3.6-litre air-cooled flat-six developed just ten ponies more than the Carrera 2. Specifically, RS output was 260bhp at 6,100rpm and 232lb-ft at 4,800rpm, numbers helped by tweaks to the engine management system. It should be noted, this is considered a conservative estimate — we know of standard examples of the 964 RS chucking out 300bhp when tested on a rolling road.

All 964 Carrera RSs sent power through a five-speed gearbox with a limited-slip differential. Suspension was adopted from the Carrera Cup cars of the time, riding forty millimetres lower than the Carrera 2. Of course, at the heart of any RS-badged 911 is a development programme focused on weight-saving and aerodynamics. These traits are as relevant today as ever, with Porsche's GT department shifting from chasing endless power gains to focusing on clever aerodynamics and advanced composite materials, as demonstrated in the latest 911 GT3 RS.

Three decades ago, innovation took a somewhat different form. Rather than a fixed wing, the 964 Carrera RS featured a retractable rear spoiler, automatically extending at 50mph, a feature pioneered on the Carrera 2 a couple of years earlier. This contrasted with the fixed wing of the 964 Turbo, though the RS carried the Turbo's 'teardrop' door mirrors to reduce frontal drag. Fog lights could be replaced with optional ducts to manage airflow to oil coolers behind the front bumper.

Available in either Lightweight, Clubsport or Touring packages, almost nine in ten 964 Carrera RSs produced were to Lightweight specification. These featherweights tipped scales at 1,195kg, more or less a hundred kilos under a Carrera 2. Weight-saving measures included the removal of sound insulation, underseal and the dismissal of electrical operation for the windows, mirrors and seats, as well as the removal of central locking, air-conditioning, radio, sunroof, rear seats and even the courtesy light. Further mass was ditched with the appointment of an aluminium bonnet and magnesium wheels. Add all this together and showroom visitors emptied wallets for fifteen grand more than if they were buying a Carrera 2. The overall result, however, was far greater than the sum of its parts (or lack thereof).

With no factory alarm system, it's a surprise any examples of the 964 Carrera RS have survived, considering the 1990s was the era of joyriding. In truth, few RSs remained unscathed. Some even ended up as track cars in the late 1990s and early 2000s, such was the depressed value of air-cooled 911s, not least the 964 range. Things have moved on. Put it this way, in the present, a good example of a 964 Carrera RS is going to set you back two hundred grand or more. Not cheap by any definition, but then again, transforming a standard 964 Carrera 2 to RS specification is likely to cost more than buying the real deal. Why, then, would anyone choose to do so?

THE MAGIC NUMBER

As far as I can see, there are three very good reasons. Firstly, 964 RSs were abused in the late 1990s. They became the Porschephile's go-to track day car, a role shared with the Carrera RS 2.7. They were crashed. As difficult as it is to imagine now, these cars were, in many ways, considered disposable. Mothballing in the garages of collectors has really only been a thing for the RS in the past fifteen years or so. All this means there aren't a huge number of 964 Rennsports for sale with clean history. The challenge in finding one is even more difficult if you're after right-hand drive, of which little more than a hundred such examples were produced.

Secondly, an RS replica offers the opportunity to re-engineer key parts of the Rennsport recipe. The car pictured on these pages, for example, goes far beyond a carbon copy of a genuine RS. It takes what makes an

Facing page Ninemeister's 9m tuning division can build you a 964 to this specification, should you want one (and why on earth wouldn't you?!)

RS special and reinvents the parts not considered particularly desirable, making a more usable and relevant package for today's roads.

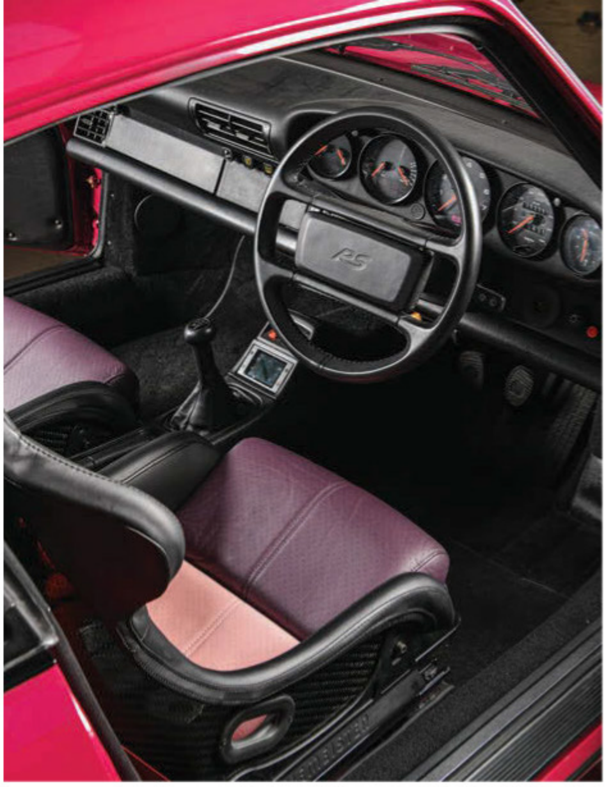
Thirdly, for those with an eye for detail, any 964 will need work across mechanicals and bodywork to achieve a standard close to ideal. There are several specialists capable of restoring a 964 to standard specification. There are many more able to carry out modifications, but few understand how to restomod thoroughly and sympathetically. Even fewer strive for perfection.

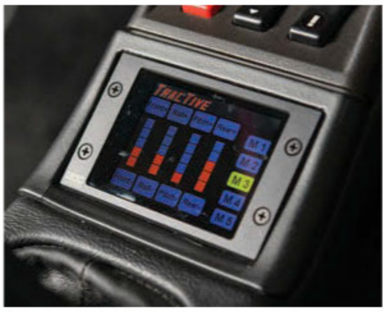
If the latter is what you're looking for (and why wouldn't you?), independent Porsche maintenance and restoration house, Ninemeister, should be on your hitlist. The Warrington-based company's tuning and restoration arm, 9m, has delivered several bespoke 911s of late. While all have been air-cooled cars, including a 993 GT2 interpretation featured on the cover of the April 2025 issue of our sister title, *911 & Porsche World*, each has been tuned to exacting requirements, resulting in improvements over original Porsche specification, whilst remaining sympathetic to the manufacturer's original design and intention.

Pulling this off is a delicate balancing act, but when it comes to 911s, Ninemeister co-founder, Colin Belton, has an encyclopaedic knowledge of all things mechanical and engineering, having been fully immersed in their workings for than three decades. In the case of a 964, the 9m team's combination of a complete nut-and-bolt rebuild and an objective to hone the purpose of the car results in what the RS should arguably have always been. This is an important point. Let's not forget, the 964 Carrera RS has only relatively recently become a desired 911, but continues to lack the affectionate following of the Carrera RS 2.7, or even the later 993 Carrera RS. Perhaps it's the lack of fixed rear wing?

Let's face it, the 964 RS came at an awkward time for Porsche, when the brand was battling economic uncertainty and challenges from within. The 964 RS was ahead of its time, delivering trackday capabilities in a road-legal package long before road-going track cars were mainstay. It's not a stretch to say the RS was misunderstood and misplaced in period. The passage of time, however, has been forgiving, with RS values rising almost ten-fold between the mid-2000s and today. The 964 now sits in a wonderful spot between classic 911 size and feel, without the rudimentary torsion bar suspension of old — the 964 introduced a full coilover setup,

Above Once a Polar Silver Carrera 2, this stunning 964 has been thoroughly reimagined by the Ninemeister crew





Above Interior is punctuated by a full-colour touchscreen display controlling TracTive dampers

improving predictability and stability. Little wonder so many 964s are used as a base for backdating and modification.

The owner of our star car is Hong Kong-based Adrian Ma. He's long been a fan of the 964. His brief to 9m was to build an RS replica to the highest standards, but configured to his exacting specification, such as right-hand drive and with no sunroof. Try finding a genuine 964 RS in this form and the conversation will soon turn to how to build one yourself.

> COLIN WILL TELL YOU THE WAY TO IMPROVE ON AN RS IS TO APPLY THE WEIGHT-SAVING PHILOSOPHY ACROSS INTERNAL ENGINE COMPONENTS

The ideal starting point for a build of this nature is an accident-free Carrera 2. In this case, the donor was a Polar Silver example with a black interior. It was previously owned by enthusiast, Ray Stobbs, who meticulously maintained the car, undertaking a bare metal respray and engine rebuild in the early 2010s. He also added Cup wheels, door mirrors and bumper intakes.

Ray was an active member of Porsche Club Great Britain, attending events in his local Lake District stomping ground. During his ownership, the car was worthy enough to be loaned to Porsche Cars Great Britain for display at the launch of the 991-generation 911 at Silverstone Circuit and to celebrate fifty years of the 911 at Goodwood House. Sadly, Ray passed away in January 2016. Ownership switched to his widow, Lynn. She used the car for several club events throughout the following spring and summer, before blessing Adrian custodianship by passing title in October 2016, by which time the odometer displayed 160,000 miles.

NINEMEISTER

From the get-go, Adrian's intention was to own a personalised 964 RS evocation. This build was completed in two main stages over half a decade, starting with the engine in late 2016, before the rebuild of all other areas thereafter. Being based in Hong Kong, he wanted to extract the best from the parameters of the standard engine in order to avoid any import restrictions. Ask Colin, and he'll tell you the way to improve on a 964 RS flat-six is to apply the weight-saving philosophy across internal engine components, resulting in a low-inertia, low-friction powerplant, while retaining genuine Porsche parts. This approach saw the installation of a 993 crank with matching connecting rods and pistons, reducing the reciprocating weight of components by more than a kilogram. This might not sound much, but try lifting a bag of sugar up and down 6,100 times a minute. You'll probably want to lie down.

The ECU was remapped by fuelling and ignition specialist, Wayne Schofield at Chipwizards, who was able to extract

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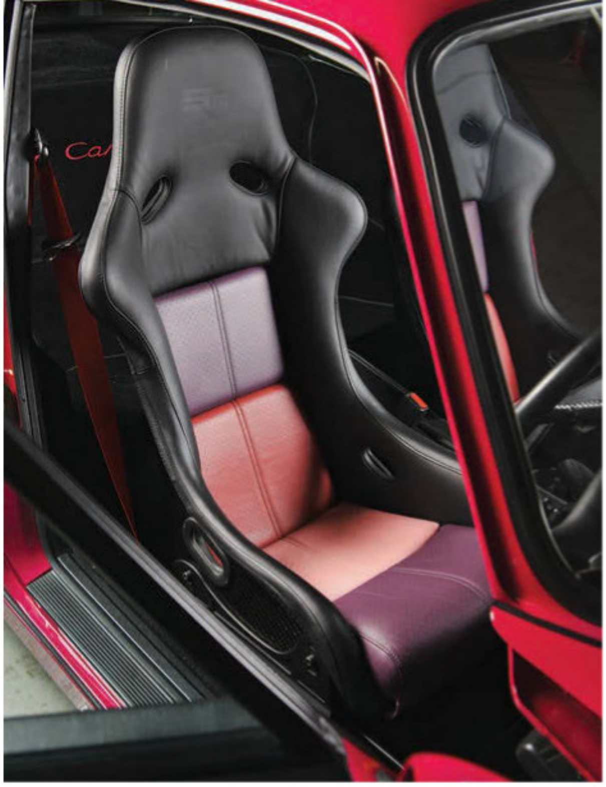

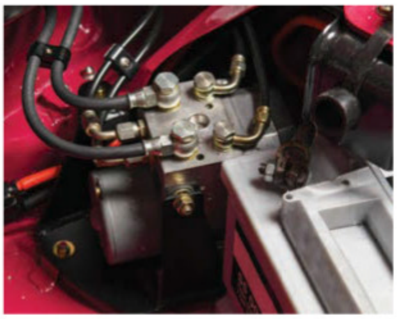

Above Brand new seats are expertly trimmed in tri-colour leather and sit on custom 9m bases

Facing page Revitalised flat-six gives a tidy 305bhp

a peachy and flexible 305bhp. A punchy flat-six by any measure. The rest of the build was turned to in 2019 (after completion of a 993 Adrian asked Ninemeister to personalise for him). As you'd expect, any thorough restoration needs a strip-down to its shell, chiefly to tackle corrosion. In this case, while the donor 964 was a solid car, rust had begun to make itself known on the inner wings. Stripping the donor car back to bare metal is also necessary to allow for seam welding. On this note, to create the stiffer RS shell, Porsche used strategic and localised seam welds on the Carrera 2 chassis. 9m goes further, adding reinforcements on the bulkhead, where stress marks can occur.

A complete strip-down also allowed 9m to replace the original sunroof for a non-sunroof panel. To eliminate any stubborn corrosion, the body was dipped by Surface Processing in Dudley and treated to an electrophoretic coating. Back at Ninemeister, the bare surface underwent a twenty-stage preparation and paint process. All panels are painted with Glasurit products in Rubystone Red, with the underside as shiny as the bodywork, contrasting the finish of an original 964 RS chassis, which only received a dusting of paint. The result is exceptional. The bodywork dazzles, drawing me in with its pin-sharp lines, making me want to unearth more about the final product, now affectionately known as the Ninemeister 9m64RS.

WRAPPED IN A SMALL PACKAGE, THE THEATRICAL GRUNT ABOVE 4,000RPM MAKES THIS 911 AS CHARMING AS A SPIRITED SHETLAND PONY

In all, 9m dedicated more than 1,500 hours to the project. Even just spending a few minutes with the car reveals an extraordinary level of detail extending across every facet of the build. In many ways, the quality of the work reveals itself below the surface. The wiring loom, for example, has been stripped and modified in-house to remove any redundant cabling, such as for a sunroof and rear wiper, while RS cut-off switches are added. This makes the entire wiring system bespoke to the car, yet is something you'll never see.

There really isn't much to gawp at inside the cabin, but everything I can touch and feel is beautifully finished. The interior specification is Lightweight, giving the cockpit a sense of singular purpose. Carrera RS carpets are attached directly to the floor without deadening, there's no way to play music and window ventilation requires manual effort. The bucket seats dominate. They're trimmed in correct triple-magenta RS colours, except these are not an original Porsche seat. Even if RS seats could be sourced, a thirty-year-old, second-hand item could have been compromised in an accident. Rather than take any risk, this build established 9m's relationship with Essex-based autoclave-carbon specialist, Reverie, a company commissioned to develop a Carrera RS seat manufactured in carbon-fibre and meeting FIA approval. The finished seats are mounted to 9m's in-house-manufactured billet side brackets.

The interior has everything you need, nothing more. The five VDO gauges behind the steering wheel are just about the clearest dials I've ever seen. This is especially true of the tachometer dead ahead, complete with 9m script, a reminder this has been a nut-and-bolt build. The cabin is tiny, yet not claustrophobic. There's a huge amount of glass, but the dash is shallow and the windscreen feels almost bolt upright. The passenger door handle isn't much of a stretch away from where I'm sitting.

Looking around, there's no hiding the 911's 1960s origins. There's just about every single size and shape of button imaginable. Quite impressive, given there are ultimately so few installed. Some need to be pushed, some pulled, some slide, some rock and some twist. The random layout is like a Rubik's Cube which hasn't been solved, but as is the case

Above Restored to perfection by the Ninemeister team, but with a keen eye on improving the Rennsport recipe

with a Rubik's Cube, I know I can prod these switches all day and none will break.

This is classic 911. Start the engine, and more feeds through to devour the senses with a gravelly idle. The thrumming mechanical beat cuts through the oddity of the feeling experienced through my feet. You see, the pedals are floor-mounted, which is great to boast about to your mates down the pub, but in reality, there's an unnatural travel to pedal movement, not helped by a girthy weight. It's an immediate throwback for anyone who has experienced seat time in an original Volkswagen Beetle. Any thoughts of VW heritage are dispelled when the flat-six breathes through an exhaust free of catalytic converters. The engine revs freely against its single-mass flywheel, which is fortunate because like most old-school normally aspirated engines, this particular flat-six does its best work at the top of the rev range.

Indeed, wrapped in a small package, the theatrical grunt above 4,000rpm makes this 911 as charming as a spirited Shetland pony. Like riding a pony, it feels alive, especially when howling at maximum output.

The gearing certainly sets this 964 apart from a standard Carrera 2. The transmission has been rebuilt using all the appropriate RS gears, including relatively short ratios, save for a tall first, which allows for a more 'active' feel, providing better traction off the line and making the car usable in tight corners. Front brakes from a Turbo and Carrera Cup calipers at the rear are as per a genuine RS, making light work of slowing down to first gear. There are subtle differences over an RS, though. This 9m car runs a four-channel ABS system, with the chassis modified to accommodate a larger servo and master cylinder lifted from the 993 RS. The advantage over a three-channel system from a standard 964 is found on track, where the driver is better able to modulate turn-in under braking, making it easier to get the car oscillating at the sweet spot between understeer and oversteer.

THE TRANSMISSION HAS BEEN REBUILT USING ALL THE APPROPRIATE RS GEARS, INCLUDING RELATIVELY SHORT RATIOS, SAVE FOR A TALL FIRST

Managing a 964 Carrera RS has long been a gripe. In period, this model was shamed for unforgiving ride quality, having been tuned for the smoothest of German asphalt. It is, perhaps, not so much the harshness, but the lack of control as the car bumbles along, wanting to take its own course on rutted roads like an excited toddler on a mission. There are three important changes which overcome the RS's Achilles heel, all of them setting this build apart by moving the dial in the RS's handling capabilities. For starters, the steering is a defining aspect of any 911. This is especially true of the 964, where left-hand drive models are the last 911 to feature

Above Rubystone Red remains one of the boldest shades in Porsche colour catalogue and was shared between the 964 RS and 944 S2

an unassisted rack. Parking speed can be awkward and the steering can feel a bit laden in tight corners. Moreover, managing the rear end can be a workout, but on the move, the RS is measured and delicate.

Porsche didn't make a manual rack for right-hand drive 964s, meaning the 9m64RS features power assistance, albeit honed by the 9m team. Ordinarily, a stock power-assisted steering pump drains power from the engine, dulling its response. Instead, this 911 is fitted with an electro-hydraulic pump from a GT3 Cup car boasting speed-related assistance. This best-of-both worlds approach means the 9m64RS is light around town, but weights up at speed.

The second fix concerns rubber. Keeping the 9m64RS glued to the road are Michelin Pilot Sport tyres, surpassing the grip of black circles available in the 1990s. The chassis is pinned by Carrera RS suspension supporting components throughout, combined with later 993 RS uprights adjusted to ensure seventeen-inch replica RS rims fill the wheel arches. The alloys came with the car, and there's a good reason why Colin hasn't switched to genuine magnesium wheels. "A magnesium wheel more than thirty years old is not something to be thrashing around on — they harden and degrade over time". Point taken.

The third is addressed by TracTive semi-automatic adaptive suspension, which improves the 964's road manners no-end, moving away from non-adjustable dampers. TracTive is distributed in the UK by 64 Tailored Performance. The system features switchable damping rates, controlled by an optional touchscreen neatly integrated to this car's centre console. Damping can be tailored to user preferences for roll and pitch, depending how potholed the roads are. Importantly, g-sensors (combined with algorithms developed from decades of testing) gives each damper autonomy to respond to road conditions in as little as six milliseconds. To say this is a game-changer for the 911 is an understatement — it allows the car to breathe with the road, giving the benefit of both greater control and comfort. What this setup does for the RS, once criticised as being too single-minded in its track bias, is expand its breadth of capabilities.

Carrera RSs have a history of punching above their weight, but the 9m964 turns the dial up further. It's more communicative, more responsive and more enjoyable more of the time. Notwithstanding GT3 RSs, the 964 Carrera RS remains the cheapest 911 wearing the Rennsport badge. When it comes to building your own, though, you'll need to invest more than just money. Adrian's dedication and 9m's vision have refined the RS recipe, resulting in a track car exploitable on the road and closer to perfection than Weissach achieved in period. Forget originality. The best 911s are those moulded to their owner. In this sense, the 9m64RS unquestionably triumphs as a dream drive and the perfect candidate for your next Porsche. All you need to do is ask Colin to build one for you. **CP**

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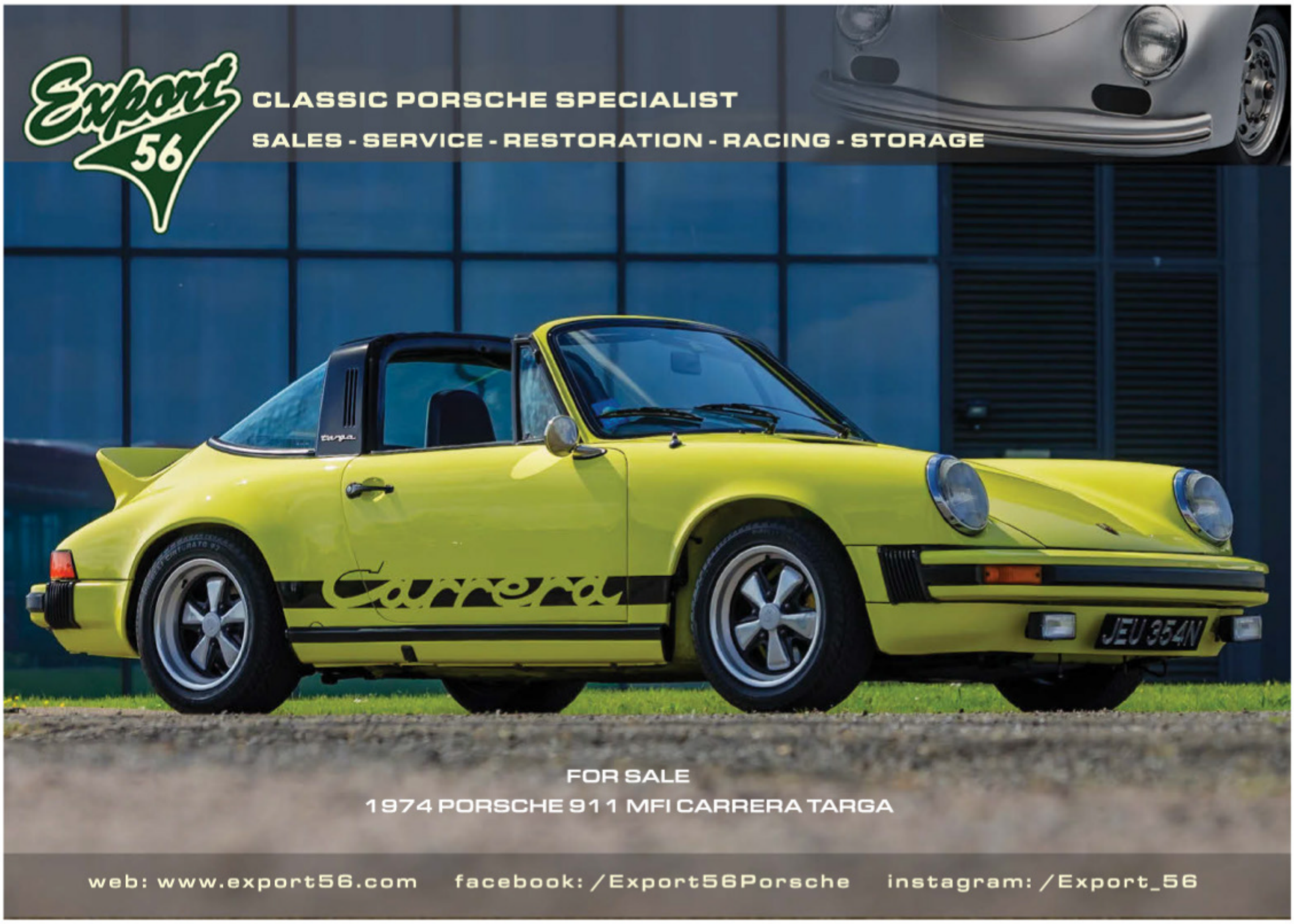
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PORSCHE NARDÒ TECHNICAL CENTRE CELEBRATES FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Nardò Technical Center (NTC), the South-Italian proving ground owned by Porsche and operated by Porsche Engineering, recently celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. Originally opened on July 1st 1975, NTC has consistently set the benchmark in vehicle testing and development for the automotive industry worldwide.

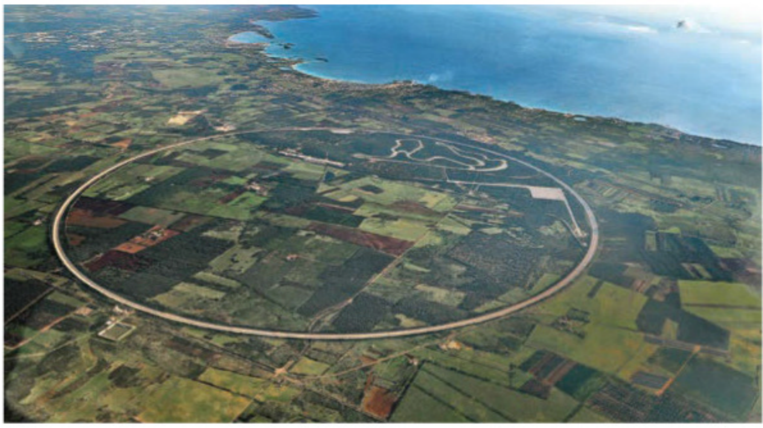
Today, NTC offers year-round testing services under a wide range of conditions, including high-speed endurance and complex handling scenarios, as well as ADAS validation and autonomous driving testing. These capabilities ensure the development of high-performance, intelligent, connected and safe vehicles. The 700-hectare site features twenty test tracks and facilities, including the iconic high-speed 'ring', a 6.2-kilometre handling course and state-of-the-art simulation technologies. "We are honoured to celebrate this special anniversary and feel a deep sense of responsibility for what NTC represents," says Antonio Gratis, Managing Director of NTC. "We are proud of its history, of its contribution to the industry and of the many people who shaped this venue during the course of more than five decades," he adds. "This is not just a test centre — it's a place where technology and purpose come together to move mobility forward and where the next chapters of innovation are already being written."

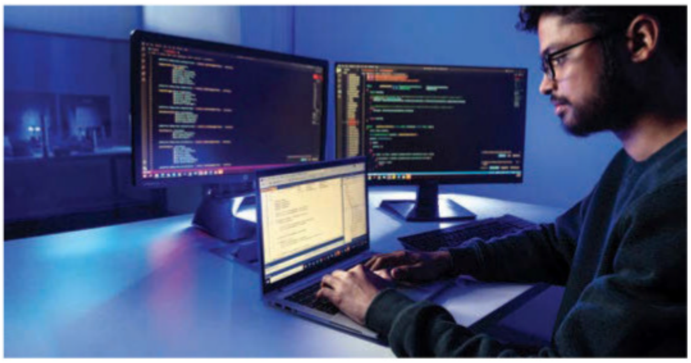
Originally established by Fiat, the proving ground quickly earned a reputation for its groundbreaking 12.6-kilometre circular high-speed ring track, a revolutionary concept at the time and still unique in its shape and dimension today. Over the decades, NTC has enhanced its testing capabilities with additional tracks and infrastructure, serving as a pivotal proving ground for diverse testing requirements and as the venue of various historic milestones, including multiple speed records and endurance tests shaping automotive engineering standards.

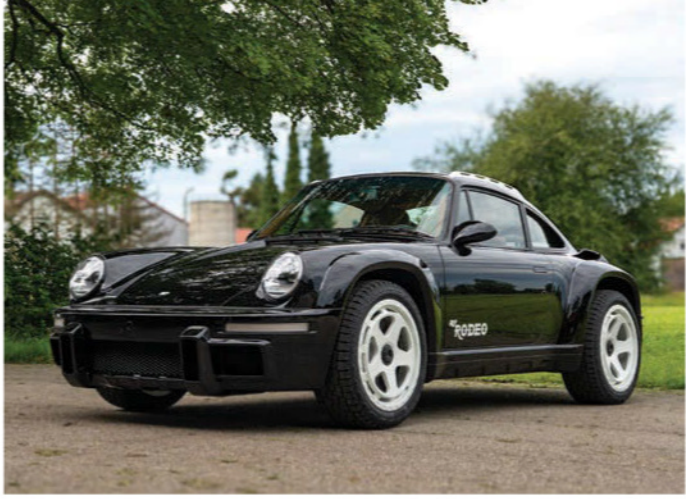
MEET THE NEW BOSS

Acquired by Porsche in 2012, NTC became a core part of the comprehensive development and validation ecosystem of Porsche Engineering, an international engineering services provider for B2B customers. NTC's integration into Porsche Engineering's global network marked a new chapter, driving significant investments in modernisation, infrastructure and digitalisation. It also extended capabilities across the entire vehicle development process, including seamless, real and virtual workflows. This solidified NTC's vital role as a leading technology partner for next-generation mobility by addressing the evolving demands of the global automotive industry.

Even prior to ownership of the Apuila-located venue, Porsche used NTC as a proving ground for many of its vehicles, including air-cooled cars. Beyond its technological impact, NTC plays an important role in Southern Italy's economy and serves a local innovation hub — during the last decade alone, NTC contributed an average of twenty million euros per year to the local economy. Through strong partnerships with local universities, technical schools (ITS) and via a dual education system, NTC actively fosters high-level talent and develops future-ready skills in the Salento region. Here's to the next fifty years of NTC.



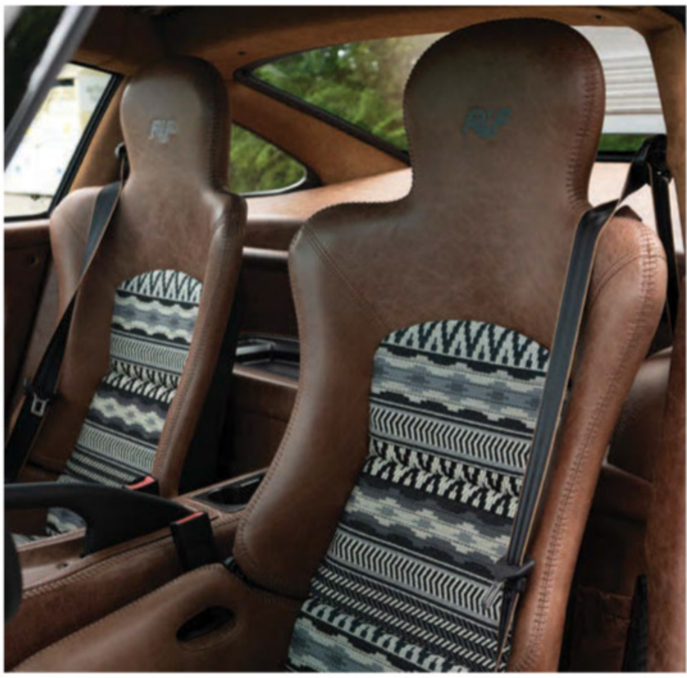




RUF DELIVERS FIRST PRODUCTION RODEO TO NEW OWNER AT MONTEREY CAR WEEK

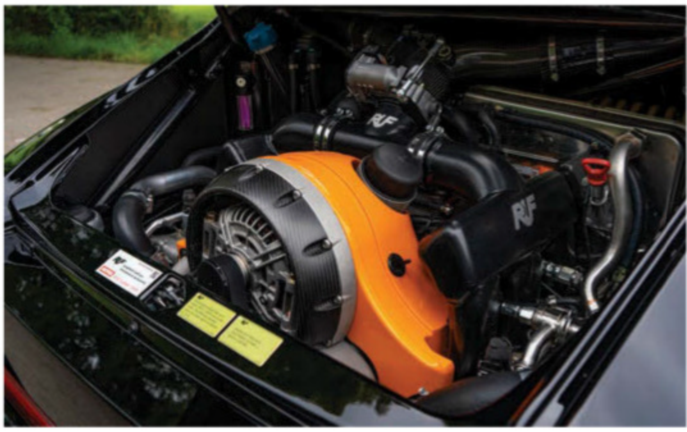
Legendary supercar manufacturer, RUF Automobile, proudly presented its first customer-ordered Rodeo at *The Quail, a Motorsports Gathering*, during Monterey Car Week. Following the model's massively successful world debut at last year's event, the delivery marks a milestone for RUF's off-road sports car, the world's only all-terrain production vehicle constructed on a carbon-fibre monocoque chassis. Appearing alongside the new Rodeo was RUF's latest CTR3 EVO, finished in a striking shade of Howe White, also delivered to its new owner at the prestigious event, as was the first production Tribute, another air-cooled 911-alike, created to commemorate sixty years of the 911. The prototype Tribute debuted at The Quail in 2023. Needless to say, Alois Ruf Jr was thrilled to be back at *The Quail* with three distinctly different (but equally captivating) interpretations of its 911-inspired carbon-fibre sports cars.

Presented in a deep shade of Jordan Black with centre-lock forged wheels finished in white, the first customer-specified Rodeo's dark, chiselled design is accented with white-finish roof rails, white model designations and, arguably most striking of all, quad-stacked exhaust tips integrated into the rear bumper. On this note, the front and rear bumpers feature integrated bash bars, with wide fender flares giving the design an extra sense of solidity, whilst supporting a forty-one-millimetre (1.6-inch) wider front and 142-millimetre (5.6-inch) wider rear track when compared to the RUF SCR. Bespoke bi-LED headlights take the darkness out of night. They're complemented by full LED taillights for a modern, safety-forward design.



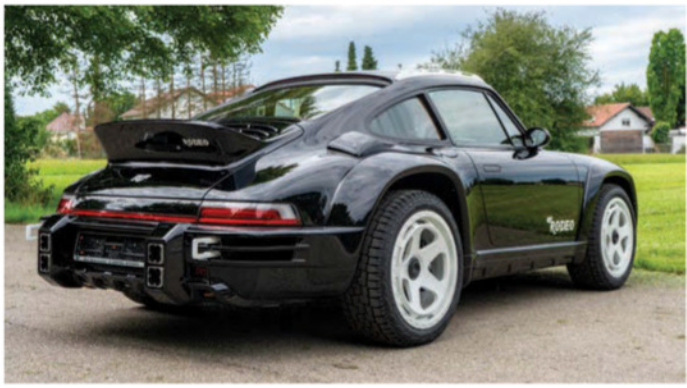
> **ARGUABLY MOST STRIKING OF ALL, QUAD-STACKED EXHAUST TIPS INTEGRATED INTO THE REAR BUMPER**

The Rodeo's striking look is underpinned by mechanicals optimised for any terrain. An in-house engineered RUF fully-adjustable all-wheel-drive system allows variable torque distribution from front to rear. A specialised double-wishbone suspension system featuring pushrod-actuated horizontal dampers raises ride height by 242 millimetres (9.5 inches) over that of the SCR. Sopping power is handled by RUF's advanced ceramic brake system, with six-piston monobloc calipers mated to super-effective 350-millimetre (13.8-inch) ceramic discs at all four corners.



Power is provided by RUF's 3.6-litre turbocharged flat-six, developing near 600bhp and 516lb-ft torque. A six-speed manual transmission ensures maximum control over power delivery, whilst retaining the analogue driving experience buyers have come to expect from RUF sports cars.

Somewhat bizarrely, in celebration of the Rodeo's first delivery, Alois Ruf Jr's daughter, Aloisa Ruf, presented a collection of commemorative jeans (yes, you read correctly). Each pair is individually numbered and features her hand-written signature. We sense you're already making a dash for your cheque book, but hold tight — we're told these will be released for sale in the near future.



"These three new cars represent the breadth of what RUF has to offer," says Alois Ruf Jr. "The Rodeo satisfies our love for adventure, the CTR3 EVO is our track-ready engineering masterpiece designed for maximum speed, and the Tribute is our modern-day callback to the original 911, a car I fell in love with. We are honoured to have been able to present these three RUFs at *The Quail* and to hand the production Rodeo and CTR3 EVO to their new owners."

In a world of expanding artificial intelligence and excessive automation, RUF is dedicated to keeping the thrill of analogue driving alive. The Rodeo, CTR3 EVO and Tribute possess this philosophy. All are handbuilt at RUF in Pfaffenhausen.

GUNTHER WERKS UNVEILS REIMAGINED 993 IN FLACHBAU FORMAT AT QUAIL

Another Quail reveal. This time, it's the turn of Gunther Werks. The firm unveiled its first Flachbau-inspired build at *The Quail, A Motorsports Gathering*. Project F-26 marks the culmination of everything Gunther Werks has learned since its first reimagined 993, revolutionising the Turbo platform to deliver a staggering 1,000bhp.

Project F-26 gets its name from the aerodynamic shape of a fighter jet and is limited to production of just twenty-six units. Visually, F-26 takes inspiration from the iconic 935 race car and the 930 SE road car, combining timeless design with Gunther Werks' innovative treatment of carbon-fibre and the brand's focus on performance. Coated in custom metallic paint, the F-26 features a carbon-fibre high-downforce wing, new rear panels (with an aggressive side intake design) and squared off rear quarters, all punctuated by a dramatic Flachbau front end recalling one of Porsche's boldest design experiments.

The F-26's in-house engineered carbon-fibre front end replaces the Porsche Flachbau pop-up headlights with fixed units, enhancing airflow and reducing drag, contributing to a lightweight design resulting in kerb weight of only 2,700 pounds. Power is supplied by an air-cooled twin-turbocharged four-litre flat-six co-developed by Jeff Gamroth at Rothsport Racing. The unit produces 750lb-ft torque and connects to a six-speed manual transmission loaded with a limited-slip differential. Keeping the engine cool is a motorsport-derived flat fan, which provides more than double the volume of air than a standard vertical fan. More significantly, it provides even cooling to all six cylinders. Additional upgrades include an all-new carbon-fibre airbox, a redesigned intercooler plenum and integrated blow-off valves within the intake system.

THE STEERING WHEEL DRAWS INSPIRATION FROM THE WING-ANGLE PROFILE OF A FIGHTER JET

The F-26 runs on high-octane ethanol with adaptive fuel mapping for standard high-octane gasoline. Lightweight carbon-fibre charge pipes feed the engine with charged air to ensure the best response for the turbochargers. A custom 935-style exhaust with external wastegates gives the F-26 its distinctive sound.

The car is equipped with staggered single-piece magnesium wheels wrapped in Continental ExtremeContact Force tyres (295/30R/18 at the front, 335/30R/18 at the rear). The chassis features all-new double-wishbone front suspension, adaptive JRZ dampers, motorsport-grade ABS and advanced traction control. The rear wheelbase has been extended thirty millimetres to the rear, thereby improving centre of gravity.

The interior of the F-26 features exposed carbon-fibre and custom leather upholstery paired with Alcantara headliner accents. The steering wheel draws inspiration from the wing-angle profile of a fighter jet, while the wooden shift knob pays tribute to Porsche's racing heritage. A contemporary dashboard combines a Porsche Classic radio with Apple CarPlay, blending vintage charm with modern convenience.

"The Flachbau design is a bold message from Porsche's past," says Peter Nam, founder of Gunther Werks and its parent company, Vorsteiner. "The timing felt right to reimagine Flachbau with modern craftsmanship and engineering, using the 993 as our starting point. It's our way of bridging nostalgia with optimised performance for the modern driver."

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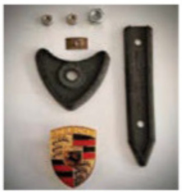

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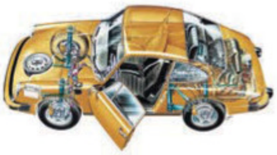

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911/912 1965-68 Coupe Vent Seal, Left

911/912 Chrome Rear Bumper Guard 65-68

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914 Taillight Assembly Left Euro

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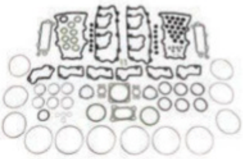
964/930



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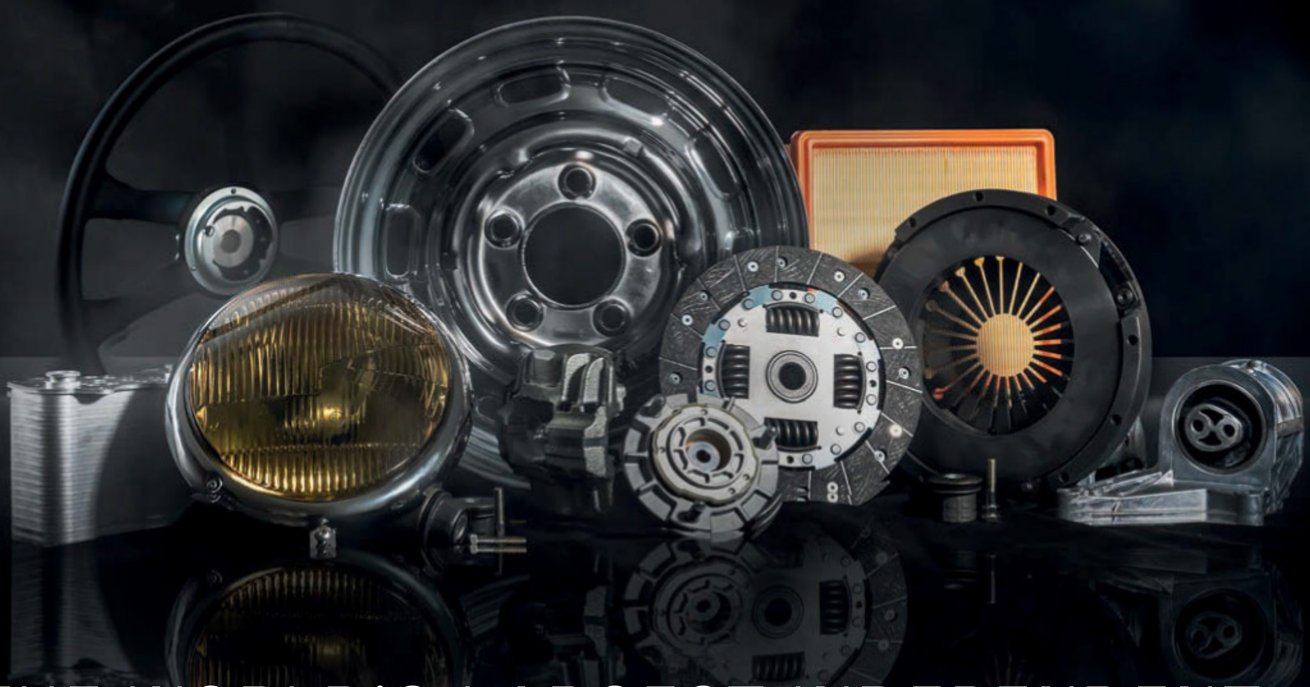

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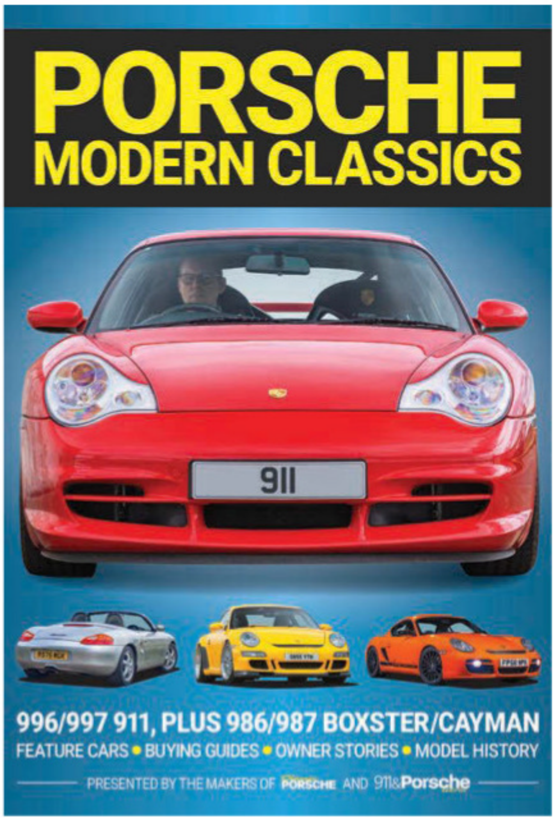
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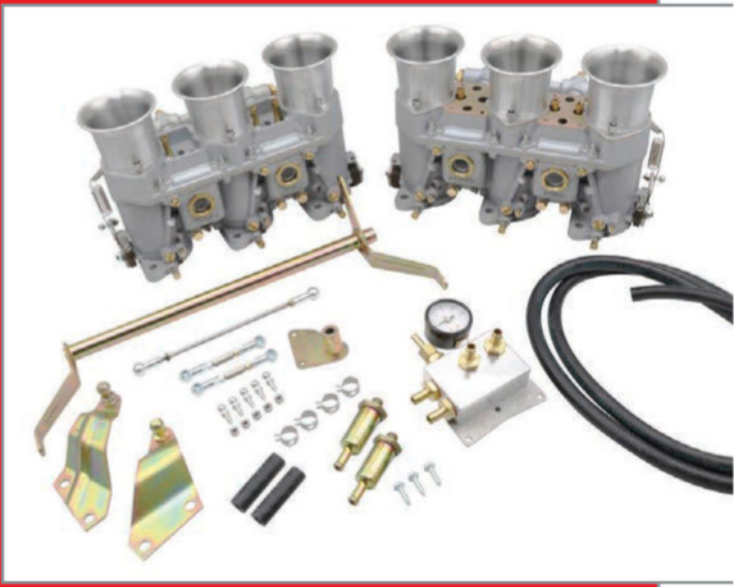

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Price: £250 special edition, £195 standard edition
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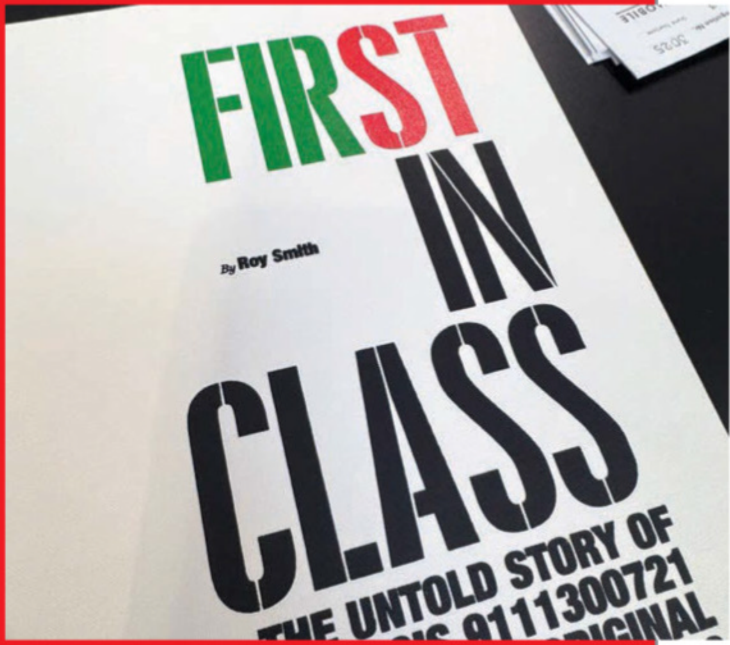

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7.0x15 *OFFSET : ET 23 MM*

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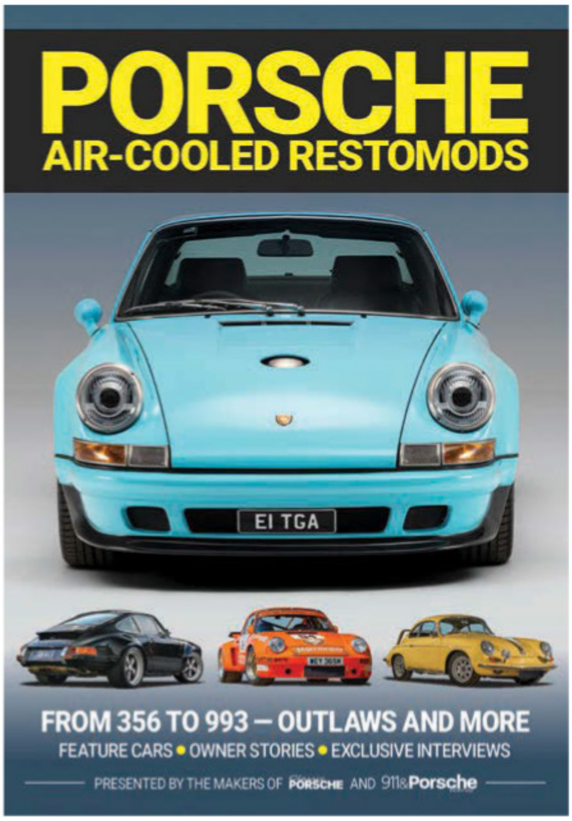
NEW BOOKAZINE AIR-COOLED RESTOMODS

Hot on the heels of our hugely successful *Air-Cooled Classics* and *Modern Classics* bookazines comes *Air-Cooled Restomods*, a 164-page celebration of modified classic Porsches. In this glossy, feature-packed publication, the team behind *Classic Porsche* and *911 & Porsche World* magazines travels far and wide to uncover a variety of extraordinary air-cooled Outlaws and restomods spanning the evolution of Porsche sports cars, from the 356 through to the 993, noted for being the final iteration of classic 911. Along the way, we get behind the wheel, delve into owner stories, explore ground-breaking engineering and salute the creators of these cars, as well as the Porsche restomodding scene they inhabit. We celebrate home-build heroes and big-budget professional projects, speak to industry professionals — including Rob Dickinson at Singer Vehicle Design and Nick Mebberson at Radial Motion — and look at leftfield approaches to bringing air-cooled Porsches into the modern era of motoring. Essential reading for marque enthusiasts, this brilliant bookazine argues the case for all classic Porsches being ripe for personalisation, citing the manufacturer's decision to offer its customers individual equipment from the early days of the 356, even if the brand didn't shout loudly about the fact. Fast-forward to the present day and we find ourselves at what many enthusiasts consider peak of the restomod scene, taking the idea of Porsche personalisation to dramatic new levels. *Air-Cooled Restomods* is available to order for home delivery at the link below.

Price: £14.99

Visit *shop.kelsey.co.uk/restomod*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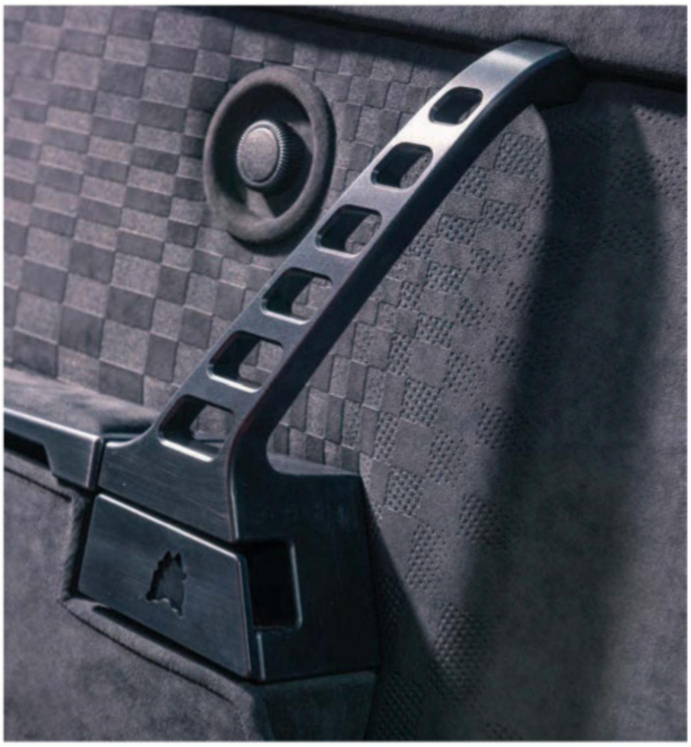
Visit *bit.ly/sub911pw*

DAVE THE TRIMMER DOOR CARD HANDLES FOR G-SERIES 911 & 964

As you'll recall from previous issues of *Classic Porsche* magazine, Dave Goodwin, founder of UK-based automotive interior specialist, Dave the Trimmer, comprehensively customised the cabin of his stunning Guards Red 964 Carrera 2, thereby using the car as a rolling demonstration of his company's capabilities. In doing so, he reimagined the Porsche's factory door card handles by creating bespoke CAD drawings and then machining each handle from a solid piece of billet aluminium. The material was chosen to prevent the associated 'bin lids' warping over time. Lightweight and featuring machined cut-outs (six, in recognition of the number of cylinders at the rear of a 911), these unique cabin enhancements can be anodised in a choice of colours to suit the interior of your G-series 911 or 964. Alternatively, they can be painted to any colour or finish of you choosing. Additionally, the door pull release can either be finished flat or with the option of relief in the form of a Dave the Trimmer logo (pictured) for those who want to pay tribute to the company's work. Intrigued by the laser-etched Pasha on those door cards? If you like more than just the door handles, then you'll be pleased to know Dave is currently offering his nifty 911 for sale.

Price: £1,600

***davethetrimmer.com* or call 01908 565039**



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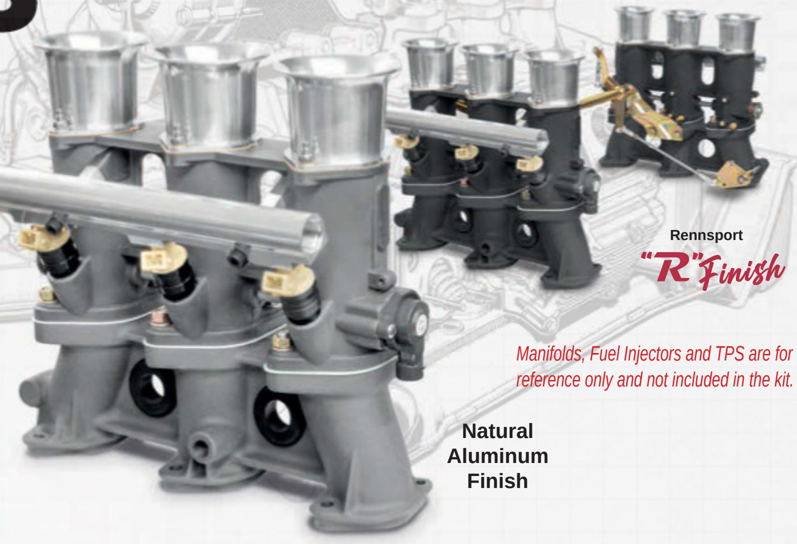

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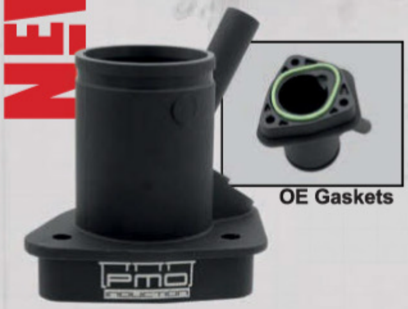

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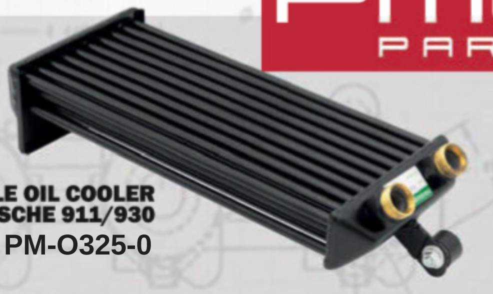
PM-O966-0 1995-1998 (993)



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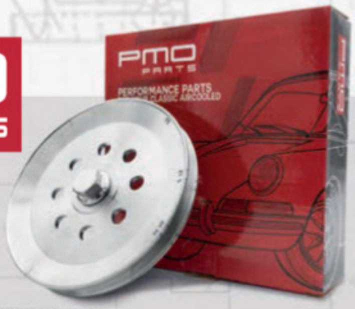

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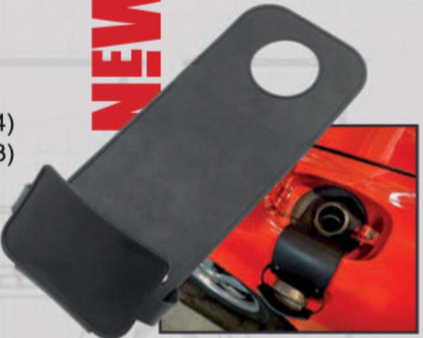

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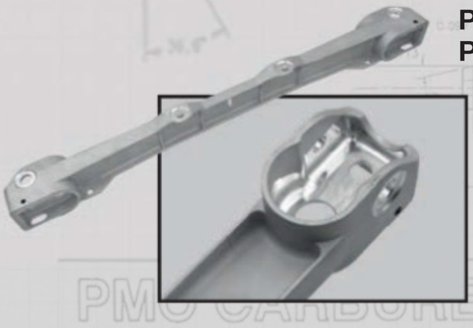

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CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

Once a tired Grand Prix White example of the venerable Carrera 3.2, this stunning Calgary-based 911 now boasts full restoration, a custom paint job and a flat-six with 3.4 litres of displacement...

Words **Garry Melnyk** Photography **James Kelly**

Carrera
PORSCHE
Alberta
NON MBA
PORSCHE CLUB OF AMERICA

What does the owner of a high-end body shop drive when the sun is shining and the asphalt is dry? Chances are, it's a fast sports car configured to suit their personal taste in automotive styling, as well as their driving behaviour. Proving the point, Loc Ngo, founder of Calgary-based Cosmos Collision, bought his Carrera 3.2 back in 2015. He then swiftly set about travelling a path resulting in the striking creation you see on the pages before you.

Specialising in repair and revitalisation of German sports cars, Cosmos Collision takes care of everything from wheel refurbishment to extensive body restoration. Modification is also a key part of the Cosmos Collision offering, and has proved popular with Alberta's car community, although being an approved repair centre for Porsche, Audi, Mercedes-Benz and, er, Tesla helps, of course.

The long and winding road to Ngo's success began more than forty years ago. As a child growing up in Vietnam, he witnessed his uncle's passion for small-engined scooters and identifies this as being the catalyst for his love of cars. Several years after the end of the Vietnam war, Ngo's family relocated to Canada, where he knuckled down at school and further indulged his love of automobiles.

After leaving formal education, he took a job cleaning offices. One day, while peering out the window of the commercial space he was cleaning, he spotted a Japanese sports car sitting outside a body shop. Something within him prompted a visit to the facility the next day, resulting in a brief meeting with the company's owner. By this time, Ngo had a young family and recognised he needed to learn a skill if he was to take advantage of the social mobility Canada offered its citizens. After explaining this to the body shop owner, Ngo was given a tour of the building and invited to return as an employee on the understanding he would have to learn the ropes from ground up, starting with sweeping floors and emptying waste baskets. Fast-forward six months, and Ngo was detailing cars and learning the art of preparing bodywork for paint.

Formal training with a paint manufacturer followed, as did enrolment at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, all while he continued to work at the body shop. In fact, he remained there for eleven years, before taking the step up to a General Motors dealership. At this point, however, with more than a decade of solid work experience under his belt, he noticed body shops claiming to work on high-end cars seemingly lacked the ability to deliver a first-rate standard of work and the equally important level of customer service

Above The colour is a custom tint blended by one of Ngo's employees

Above and below Interior carries the orange accent, but contrasts it with black for the dashboard, parcel shelf and carpets

owners of these cars demand. When he learned Cosmos Collision was up for sale in 2008, he took a leap of faith and bought the business with a view to filling what he saw as a gap in the marketplace.

From the outset, his goal was to secure official accreditation as an approved body shop for premium manufacturers, including Porsche. This isn't as easy as it sounds, but through hard work, dedication and perseverance, his ambition was realised. The nod of approval from Jaguar Land Rover followed, as did accreditation from Bentley. This was no mean feat, especially considering how complicated the approval process has become, a direct consequence of the standard and extent of work owners demand for their cars, especially in the realm of restoration. In parallel with manufacturer ratification, Ngo worked closely with suppliers of top-tier detailing products and paint, citing the team at Sikken as being particularly helpful in helping him achieve his goals.

THE SMELL OF GASOLINE PROMPTED NGO TO HAVE THE TEAM AT PORSCHE CENTRE CALGARY EXAMINE THE CAR'S ENGINE

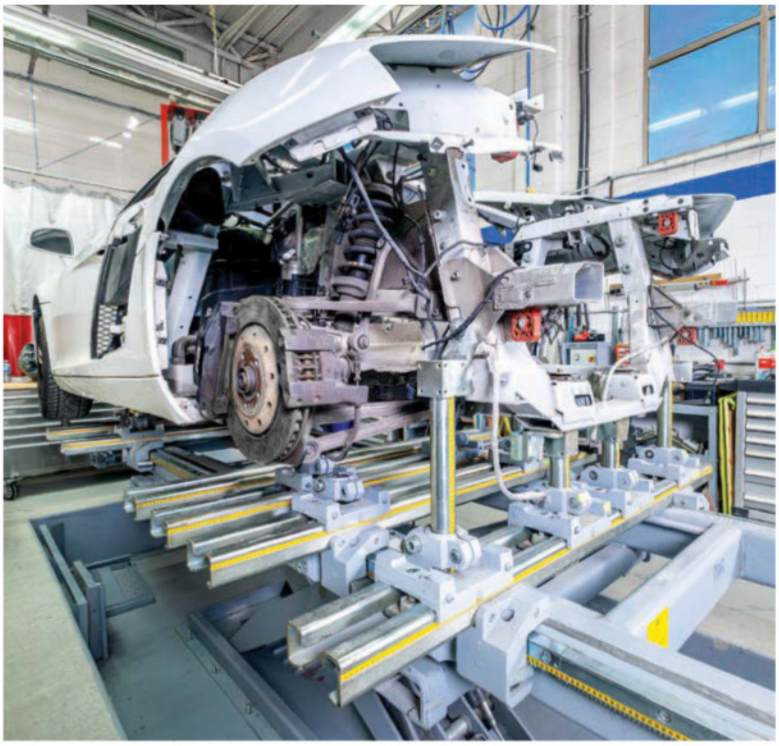
Later, he moved the business to bigger premises, designing the workspace to be bright, meticulously organised and easy to clean. He took influence from high-end body shops he visited while on vacation in Europe, resulting in the installation of a lift system raising bumper covers off the shop floor and storing them high in Cosmos Collision workshop ceiling. A great idea taking advantage of 'dead' space at zero cost.

Ngo invests heavily in his employees, encouraging technicians who show dedication and skill in their craft to continually evolve their skill set. Irrespective of cost, he has no hesitation in sending staff for training in order to upgrade their talents. He sees this as money well spent, benefiting not just the individual, but the business as a whole, even if such training commands a six-figure sum. "I always ask my staff for input when we're trying something new," he tells us. "They come to me with concerns or ideas to improve workflow. I make sure to reward people for their ideas." It comes as no surprise to learn he has two employees who have been with him since 2008, though most of the workforce have remained with the business for many years.

"Our restoration work is ninety-nine percent Porsche," Ngo confirms, before going on to reveal he is active in Porsche Club Canada's local outpost and has a good working relationship with the Porsche Classic Partner technicians at Porsche Centre Calgary. So much so, in fact, vehicles undergoing restoration at the Centre are almost always forwarded to Cosmos Collision for paint and bodywork.

At the time of writing, we spy three air-cooled 911s (two

COSMOS COLLISION
PORSCHE



SPORT PLUS
CONTINENTAL

WP0ZZZ91ZKS120296

Above Fuchs replicas by Jongbloed Racing Wheels look nothing short of stunning

Facing page Ngo (top) and his busy team at the Cosmos Collision workshop

coupes and a Targa) undergoing restoration at his spotless workshop. He shows us how to correctly hammer a body panel. Yep, while he might be the boss, Ngo still knows how to handle the tools and retains the skills needed to turn a rust bucket into a show queen. He also stresses the importance of components used when refurbishing Porsches, preferring OEM parts where available, all of which leads us to his stunning Carrera 3.2, a 1989 registration, making it one of the last of its kind.

"Typical me," he laughs. "I want perfection, leading me to change many old parts for new as soon as I took ownership. This extends to all areas of the cars I own — when checking the condition of the Porsche's engine and mechanicals, I reasoned the underside of the car was in need of a refresh. This was a year after purchase." There was no serious corrosion to speak of, and only a small dent on the left quarter panel suggested corrective action was necessary, but Ngo worked his way through the body regardless, finishing with a fresh lick of Grand Prix White paint, Martini Racing stripes and the Fleur de Lis exhibited on each of the front wings. Yellow headlamp lenses were also added, a tribute to Ngo's grandfather, who was educated in France.

> **YOU CAN DRIVE THE CARRERA 3.2 BY THE SEAT OF YOUR PANTS, ATTACKING RATHER THAN DEFENSIVE, POSITIVE RATHER THAN PASSIVE**

A couple more years passed before the smell of gasoline prompted Ngo to have the team at Porsche Centre Calgary examine the car's engine. A cracked fuel line was discovered. This development prompted the go-ahead for a complete rebuild. During disassembly of the six-cylinder powerplant, the Centre's spanner men discovered a scratch on a cylinder wall and a gouge in a main bearing, adding to signs of a previous rebuild. With the extent of work mounting, and with the inaugural Porsche Classic Restoration Challenge on the horizon, it was suggested full restoration would be the ideal way forward, with the car serving as the Centre's entry in the highly anticipated competition. Ngo was excited at the idea of taking the opportunity to further personalise his Porsche with full support of the Centre's technicians.

The Carrera 3.2 is, with hindsight, the bedrock of air-cooled 911 annals. In production for six years, it epitomises the 911 shape, arguably more so than the long-bonnet classics, and certainly more than the play-it-safe 964 and its successor, the 993, what with its shapely curves all rounded off. The Carrera 3.2 was available in Coupé, Targa and Cabriolet format, with Slant-nose, Speedster, Club Sport and SSE Super Sport spin-offs. You thus had a choice of configurations in which to enjoy the experience, open to the elements or not.

And what of the 3.2's handling? As we've said before in these pages, on the move, all your senses come into play. The absence of power steering means everything is full-on and sensitive. Feedback is instantaneous — you feel exactly what the suspension is doing and where the car is going. Your reactions are honed to match. It's not that you don't get this with power assistance, you just experience it more directly. Left- or right-hooker, all Carrera 3.2s are hugely involving to drive, nowhere more so than twisty back roads. On a poorly surfaced B-road, the front wheels bubble over every undulation as they feel out the topography. It's alive, a creature working out which path to take for best effect, and you are controlling it by light movements of the wheel as it bucks slightly in your fingers with each and every passing bump. As you go faster, the steering progressively loads up, the more physically demanding it becomes.

The Carrera 3.2 features relatively long gearing, both in 915 and G50 transmission formats, which matches with the slow and deliberate nature of the gearshift, as you go from one notch to another quite deliberately. You can't just bang it

Above Flat-six was in poor shape, providing the perfect opportunity for a full rebuild and a capacity increase to a useful 3.4 litres

through. It's not ponderous, because you have to be precise about where you move the lever. Bring a 915 gearbox from fifth to fourth, for instance, and you have to be calculated about your movement, else you quickly graunch into reverse. Of course, it's second nature before long. Put your foot down in fifth, and you can be sure this thing will deliver the power, although it's not devastating. Better to drop a cog in an overtaking situation to be safe.

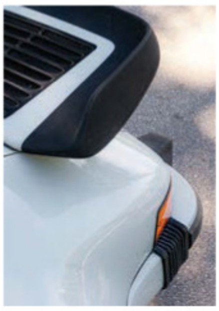
Equally, you notice how strongly the Carrera 3.2 pulls when you get up to the legal speed limit. It really delivers between 4,000rpm and 6,000rpm. Third gear overtaking on A-roads is stunningly fast, accompanied by that raucous flat-six bellowing as the revs scream towards 6,000rpm. The power builds relentlessly until you run out of road or come up on a back-marker. Conversely, this 911 will pull inexorably from 1,500rpm in top. You need to get your braking done first, ideally trail-braking up to a corner, although the stoppers are so powerful that an occasional stab will take off excess speed if you are travelling a tad too fast approaching a bend. You see, you drive the 3.2 through corners. You get the lock on early and steer it through, lock off a bit of oversteer, induced with the wheel, perhaps, but most likely by use of the throttle — off to make the front end tuck in, or on to drift out.

NOT ONLY HIS PERSONAL PROJECT, BUT ONE DESTINED TO BE UNDER THE SCRUTINY OF JUDGES IN THE PORSCHE CLASSIC RESTORATION CHALLENGE

On back roads, you can drive the Carrera 3.2 by the seat of your pants, attacking rather than defensive, positive rather than passive. On a sweeping A-road, be sure you know what the limits are — both of the road and the car — to ensure you're ready for the unexpected and have time to pull up or take avoiding action. On a roundabout, this 911 just hangs on. You can put lock on and off, making the nose tuck in or out with the accelerator. On greasy rural lanes, bearing a patina of tractor muck, you can feel it sliding, and you teeter around bends on the point of breaking away. The thing is, it's so sensitive, you can feel as much and be confident that, within reason, the car will carry on going around and not dispatch you into a hedge. Indeed, because this is a particularly strong 911 and the suspension is equally robust, you can rumble over potholes on a farm track and the car won't bat an eyelid. Although it may not be the quickest Porsche point-to-point, the 3.2 is fun and rewarding to own and drive.

After discussion with Porsche Centre Calgary's management team, it was decided to treat the engine at the rear of Ngo's 911 to increased displacement, totalling 3.4 litres. Livelier cams were selected, as was a Mahle piston kit, a new MAP sensor and an intake manifold bored and polished by Steve Wong of celebrated 911 tune shop, SCP in California.

Carrera
PORSCHE
Alberta
NON MBA
PORSCHE CLUB OF AMERICA



Above Slash-cut M&K exhaust peeks out from the centre of the car's rear end

A stickler for detail, Ngo insisted all nuts and bolts met API or manufacturer specification. He also insisted the crankshaft was thoroughly overhauled.

M&K Exhausts provided the custom headers and muffler. There are four exhaust pipes with two centre and two bypass, the latter opening by way of vacuum at full throttle. Ngo says the car's Getrag G50 five-speed gearbox never missed a beat, but was treated to a rebuild at the same time as the engine. The seals and bearings were replaced, a self-locking differential was installed and a new clutch joined the party. On this note, the clutch is an uprated part delivering a new spring rate and is deemed stronger and more reliable. The shifter is from Wevo and delivers faster and more accurate shifting.

All of the suspension and related parts have been changed to those from a contemporary 911 Turbo, including new struts and springs. As is Ngo's preference, all hardware is OEM and cadmium plated. Brakes were sourced from the Boxster parts bin and do a brilliant job of bringing the car to a swift halt.

As for the overall style of the car, he thought about backdating to the F-series aesthetic, but tells us he loves the G-series 'impact bumper' look. His vision for the body didn't deviate much from the standard-issue 911, albeit integrating a 'tea tray' rear spoiler and wider wheel arches, mirroring the Carrera 3.2 Supersport's M491 'Turbo Look' factory exterior package. Ngo obtained two OEM steel wheel flares online, then brought in a third-party technician whose company specialises in metalwork of this nature, which proved painstaking and time consuming — it took a week to weld, hammer and dolly a single quarter panel. Utilising a contractor meant the Cosmos Collision team could continue their work on client commissions, not least those in progress for Porsche Centre Calgary, without distraction. No body filler was used to blend the pronounced flares.

COMPETITION LIFE

Also time consuming was deleting the car's sunroof. In total, the bodywork took close to eight months to complete. More time was used up in the effort to prepare the Porsche for paint. As intimated, Ngo boasts years of experience in painting high-end sports cars, yet this was not only his personal project, but one destined to be under the scrutiny of judges in the Porsche Classic Restoration Challenge, which we'll come to in a moment. "It was hugely important to let the paint settle and solvents evaporate," he says. "It's how Cosmos Collision approaches all jobs. No rushing between coats. Primer was blocked and sanded many times and left to settle. The primed body was closely inspected many times to prevent imperfections showing up. There could be no compromise."

The colour covering the car is a custom blended tint presented in show-stopping quality without blemish. As for the GT3-esque orange stripes down each flank, they match the colour of the interior and wheels, which are seventeen-inch staggered (nine inches at the front, ten at the rear) Fuchs replicas manufactured by Jongbloed Racing Wheels

Above Work by the teams at Cosmos Collision and Porsche Centre Calgary in restoring this Carrera 3.2 has resulted in a string of trophy silverware

in Morgan Hill, California. The engine fan has also been painted in this zesty shade, adding a nice touch at the rear of the car. Incidentally, this particular orange was decided on after Ngo eyeballed seven different colour samples before settling on one and opting for a semi-gloss finish. In a further nod to European influence, the car's bumper overriders were changed to the less intrusive, narrower bumperettes found on non-USDM G-series 911s. Similarly, side repeaters were added and a single red fog light now finds itself mounted left of the rear valance.

A STANDOUT EXAMPLE OF THE BREED, AND ONE DESTINED FOR MANY MORE YEARS OF ACTION THANKS TO ITS DEDICATED OWNER'S ENTHUSIASM

The interior was retrimmed by the team at CR Techniques, an automotive interior restoration specialist based in Calgary. Each seat frame was modified to reduce overall weight (without compromising safety), before the liberal use of black and orange leather to replace decidedly tired burgundy hide and vinyl. Look at the instrument panel and you'll notice the rev counter is colour-coded. Neighbouring instrument fascias display a grey-blue background matching the exterior. A Porsche Classic Communication Management (PCCM) head unit resides in the centre of the dashboard, while a MOMO drilled three-spoke steering wheel makes itself known with a coloured Porsche crest on the horn push.

Taking into account the long process of sorting the bodywork around customer cars in the Cosmos Collision workshop, it took four years to complete the build. Final assembly took place at Porsche Centre Calgary, prior to the car making its appearance as the Centre's entry in the, er, 2023 outing of the Porsche Classic Restoration Challenge, considerable time after launch of the competition, which is now in its sixth year and has resulted in the restoration of more than a hundred classic and modern-classic Porsches across the United States and Canada. In fairness, restoration of this nature can't be rushed. It takes as long as it takes, especially if you want to get it right first time. Then there's the need to put the wants of clients before personal projects.

No matter, Ngo couldn't be happier with the end result — pictures of the coupe in his office and in the main lobby of his workshop demonstrate his pride of ownership. This crisp Carrera was worth the wait.

Did it win the competition, though? Well, no. The event was tough, though it's important to note judges award points not just for quality of restoration, but also a car's rarity, among other traits. Ngo's 911 is many wonderful things, but as a Carrera 3.2 coupe, it's hardly what you'd refer to as a seldom seen Porsche. Even so, the car has won plenty of awards, including Best in Class, at numerous shows and charitable events in the course of the past eighteen months. Rightly so.

As an illustration of the dramatic impact an OEM-plus approach to classic Porsche restoration can deliver, this superb Carrera 3.2 is a standout example of the breed, and one destined for many more years of action thanks to its dedicated owner's enthusiasm for the marque. The fact it also symbolises his personal growth and development following the challenges of starting a new life in a new country makes it all the sweeter. Loc Ngo, we salute you. **CP**

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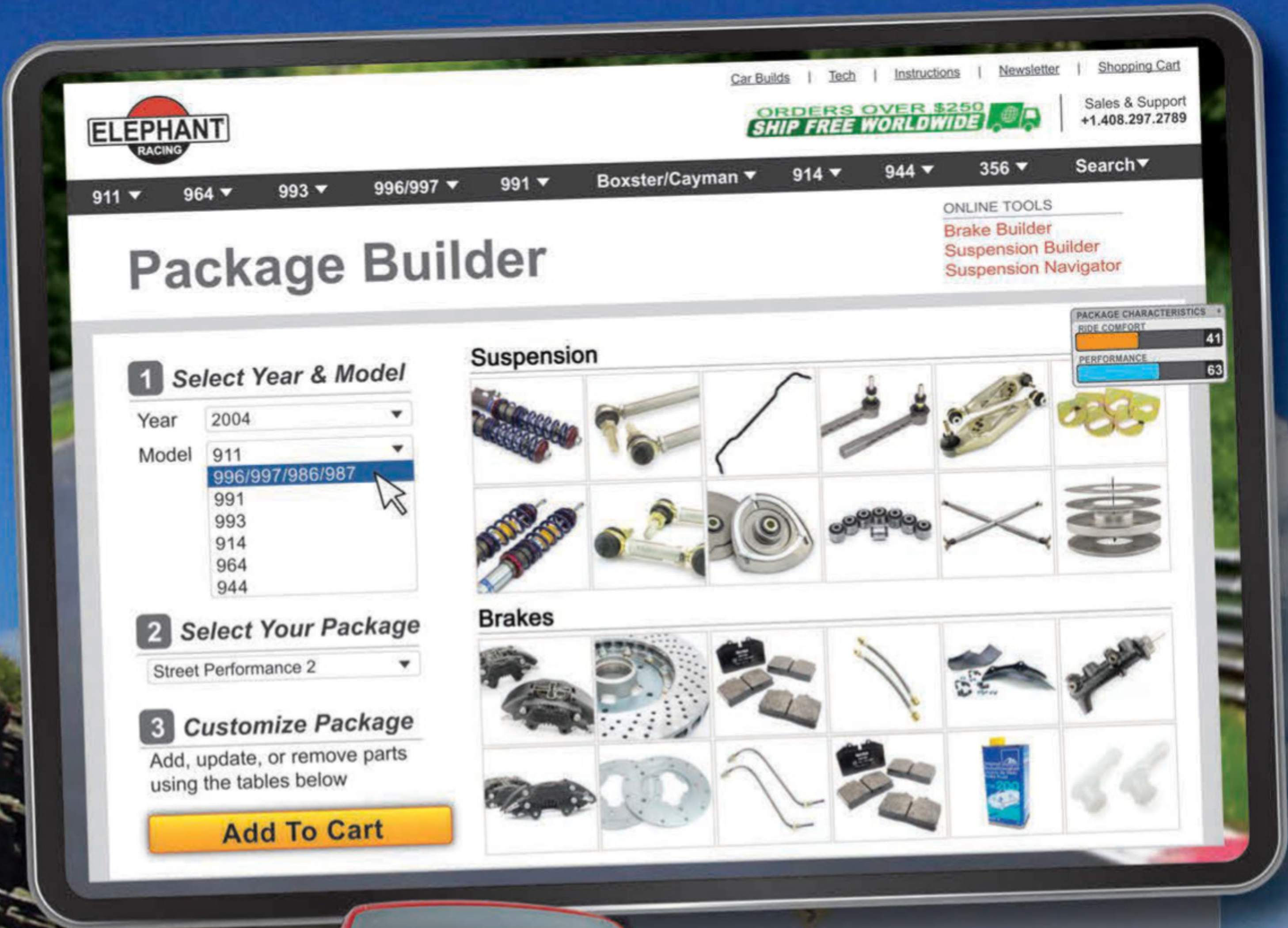

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FUTURE PAST

The 959 saw Porsche pushing the boundaries of what was possible with the day's automotive technology. The result was a road car, endurance racer and Paris-Dakar winner years ahead of its time. We get up close and personal with an extraordinary prototype responsible for playing a huge part in the story...

Words **Steve Bennett** Photography **Rob Cooper**

The 959? Where to begin?! I recently came over all nostalgic — a chance encounter with a 924 Carrera GT prompted memories of seminal Porsche moments. Hey, I'm old and my future is mainly in the past. What have I got, if not my back catalogue? I should probably apologise on account of the fact I'm about to do it again.

Thing is, for me as a kid in the 1980s, the 959 was another of those seminal Porsche moments. You're wondering if I'm about to wang on about Athena posters. Of course, you're right to think as much. You see, if you were a teenager, the 1980s were glamorous, certainly if you were a fan of cars. You probably had a glossy poster of a Lambo, Ferrari or Porsche on your wall. Or whales or dolphins, but probably not that one of the topless male model holding a baby.

Unlike the 924 Carrera GT, there were no 959s in my immediate vicinity, but I vividly remember the first time I clocked one. It was displayed on the cover of *Custom Car* magazine (the July 1985 issue, to be precise). Just like the 924, the 959 completely blew my mind. *Custom Car*? Yep, I had eclectic tastes in those days — I was just as happy with *Custom Car* as I was with a copy of *Car* or *Fast Lane*. I must have been, because little more than a year later, I was working on *Custom Car* as a junior designer, paid in luncheon vouchers, beer and cigarettes. Part of what got me the gig was the Athena-style 959 renderings in my college design portfolio, shamelessly traced from the magazine. And if you think being a nineteen-year-old working on *Custom Car* in the 1980s must have been fun, then you'd be right. Short of working on *NME*, it really couldn't have been more rock 'n' roll.

I digress. The point to take from all this is that the standard 911 didn't really do much to excite me. Show me a competition-oriented car, however, and I was in my element, as demonstrated by my love of the 924 Carrera GT, even if I didn't really understand very much about homologation. That said, I was interested in the 959's aesthetic, not Group B, but hey, I was young and I soon learned the error of my ways.

Most manufacturers viewed the homologation process as something to be endured, a means to an end — in applicable competitions, motorsport's governing bodies required the production of a specific number of a competing racer. These low-volume 'series' variants would be available to the man on the street, but nobody stressed too much about functionality. These were road racers, after all. People loved them irrespective of specification. Just look at the Ferrari 288 GTO or F40. Moreover, nobody expected air-conditioning in a Metro 6R4. This isn't the Porsche way, though.

While I didn't appreciate it at the time, Porsche's approach to developing the 959 wasn't the way things usually worked. It's almost self-flagellation. "We want to build a 200mph car not only capable of carrying four people in relative comfort, but also able to race at Le Mans and compete over the roughest terrain in the Paris-Dakar Rally."

You have to admire the ambition. Worthy of a deep dive before examining the super-special 959 in our photographs? Certainly, if only to reverse-educate my impressionable nineteen-year-old self.

> **WHILE IT LOOKS THE FULL TICKET, THIS IS ONE OF THE EARLIEST F-SERIES PROTOTYPES, OF WHICH JUST TWELVE WERE BUILT**

BACK IN THE DAY

It's hard to believe, but we need to rewind forty-two years, to the early autumn of 1983, when Porsche displayed an unexpected concept at the Frankfurt Motor Show. Dubbed *Gruppe B*, the car's smooth, futuristic lines were mesmerising. This was clearly a 911, but beamed in from another dimension. Of course, *Gruppe B* referred to some kind of motorsport endeavour, but which? *All of them* was not yet a recognisable concept.

Even for Porsche, the 959 was a technical tour de force, with four-wheel drive, copious quantities of space-age carbon-fibre and Kevlar (materials new even in the period's Formula One) and a twin-turbocharged 2.85-litre flat-six developing near 450bhp. This was the product and brainchild of Porsche's then engineering chief, Helmuth Bott, who set project leader, Manfred Bantle (famed for design of the lightweight 908/03 prototype), and his small team the challenge of probing and maximising everything possible within the parameters of the era's automotive technology.

Facing page This pretty prototype is a rare survivor and was instrumental in development of the 959, Porsche's crowning glory

Above In the supercar wars of the 1980s, the 959 proved itself the only vehicle in its class just as happy doing the weekly shop as hammering its way around race tracks

This is where ambition comes into play. Bott wanted a machine capable of competing in the toughest off-road rallies, but also to achieve success in endurance racing. In order to qualify for Group B racing, at least two-hundred road-going examples of the resulting Porsche had to be built. Rules is rules, but nowhere in those rules (drawn up by the FIA) did it stipulate a manufacturer's homologation special had to be super-exclusive, luxuriously appointed and not just road-legal, but as road friendly as a production 911.

AS PORSCHE MUSEUM RESTORATION ENGINEERS WOULD DOUBTLESS CONFIRM, INACTIVITY IS A 959'S WORST ENEMY

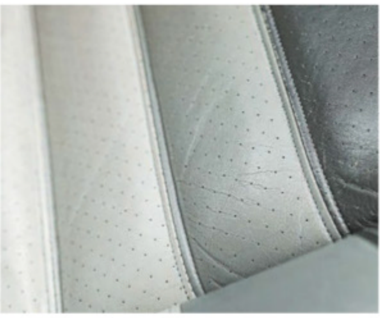
In many respects, the 959 was the Bugatti EB110 of its day. In fact, rather like the Bugatti, development took rather longer than planned. Unsurprisingly, developing the Porsche's technology proved to be quite challenging.

The heart of the 959 is a flat-six derived not from the contemporary air-cooled 911 (then the Carrera 3.2), but rather from that of the 935 and 956 race cars, with four-valves per cylinder and water-cooling for the hard-working cylinder heads. In order to meet Group B regulations for turbocharged engines, capacity was limited to the aforementioned 2.85 litres. A sequential twin-turbocharging system was developed to combat lag, which had traditionally hampered the road-going 911 Turbo (930) and its single snail-shaped bhp booster. This forward-thinking technology wouldn't appear on a 911 until the arrival of the 993 Turbo in 1995. That said, other elements of the 959 wouldn't drip down into the pool of high-volume Porsche production models until the 996 Turbo, some twenty years on from their design.

Speaking of which, the 959's greatest innovation was its drivetrain. It was the first Porsche to be sold with four-wheel drive, offering supreme stability and grip in all driving conditions. Thus, power from the rear-mounted engine passes through a six-speed manual transaxle (another road-going first) driving the rear wheels, while a longitudinal driveshaft runs forward to a second differential driving the front wheels.

The torque split between front and rear axles is controlled by a special hydraulic clutch, which Porsche dubbed *Porsche Steuer Kupplung* (PSK, translating into English as *Porsche Command Clutch*). This is electronically controlled and allows the power split to vary from 20:80 (front:rear) to 50:50 when the going gets slippery. The torque split is varied according to data received by an electronic control unit, which records throttle opening, engine load, gear selection and even individual wheel speed. Sure, it may not sound anything special now, but this was mighty clever stuff for the early to mid-1980s. It's not a stretch to say much of the 959's technology wasn't just a matter of development, but pretty much had to be invented. Think of PSK as a precursor to Porsche Stability Management (PSM).

Electronics control the suspension. The antiquated torsion bars of the 911 weren't for the 959. They were ditched in favour of Bilstein adjustable coilover units, two on each corner and controlled electronically, either automatically or by way of manual intervention, a clear blueprint for Porsche Active Suspension Management (PASM), launched on the



Above Unlike the Lamborghini Countach or Ferrari F40, the 959 offered colossal comfort in addition to its immense power

Below 'Gradient' effect seats are a hallmark of the 959

997-generation 911 two decades later. In short, 959 drivers can choose settings ranging from soft to firm to track. Even more innovative was the adjustable ride height, similar in principle to Citroën's hydro-pneumatic suspension system and offering a choice of 120mm, 150mm and 180mm, the latter for when traversing the rough stuff.

All this equipment was clad in a shell based on the galvanised steel structure of the standard 930. Beyond this, however, most of the 959's body was unique. The doors and bonnet were made from aluminium, while most of the remaining panels were fabricated from Kevlar, carbon-fibre or polyurethane. The body is optimised for aero and even the windscreen is more steeply raked than that of the same-age 911. The glass is bonded flush in its aperture.

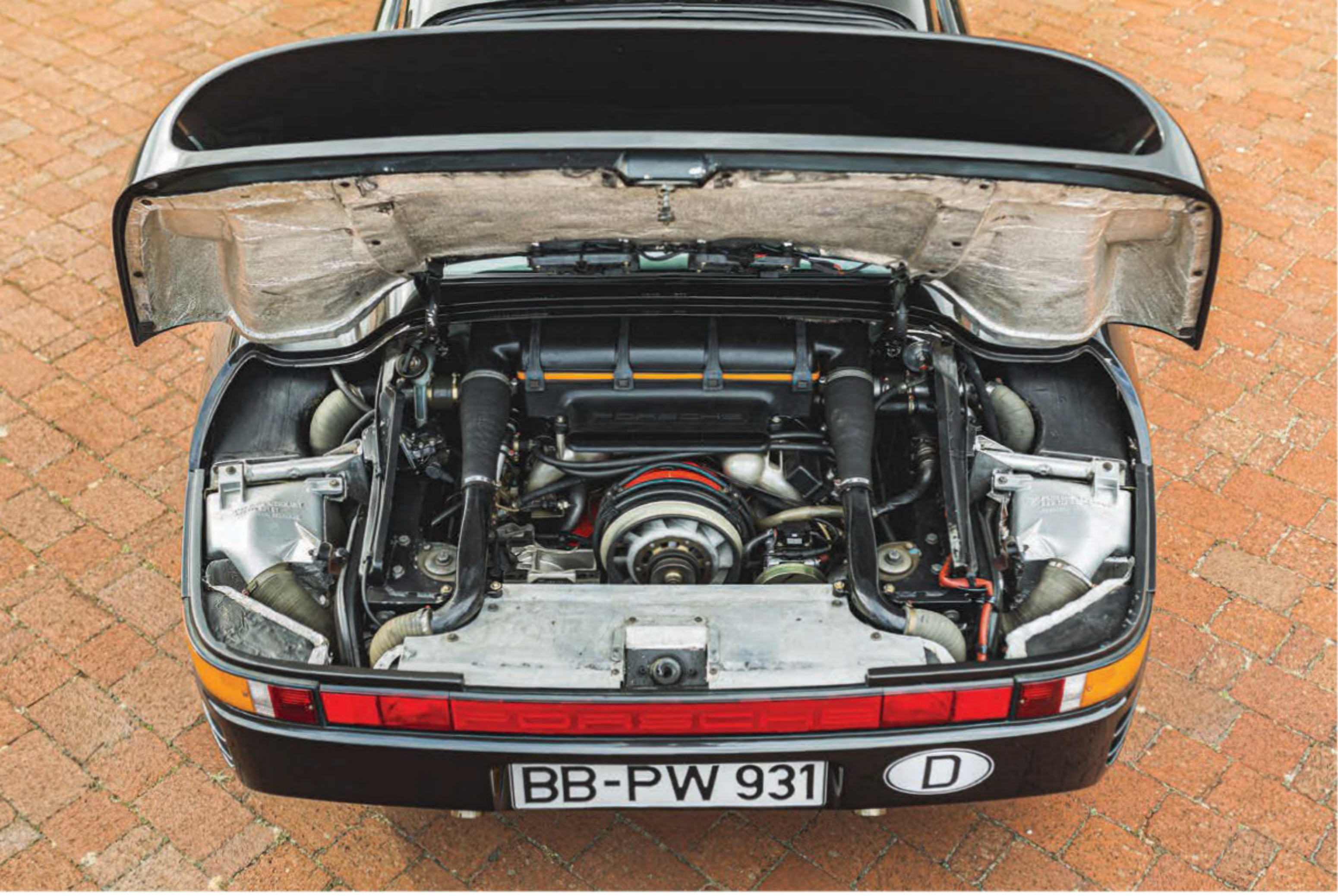
The production 959 debuted at the Frankfurt Show in 1985. All available examples sold immediately, although deliveries didn't start until 1987, with assembly largely discontinued by 1988, though a few additional cars were being built into 1992, bringing total production to just 337 cars in both Komfort and Sport specification. Many buyers took advantage of a then thriving supercar market, which offered instant profit on the list price of DM420,000 (£158,000). Sound familiar? In fairness, a few early 959 owners did actually drive their cars. A young Boris Becker, for example, famously maxed his out on the Autobahn, but most found their way into private collections.

TRACK ATTACK

Your correspondent, now rather more grown up and better paid, remembers a couple of 959s being bravely used for UK trackday action in the early 2000s. Also, a winter drive to Stuttgart in my 944 offered a fascinating look at the Porsche Museum's restoration facility, which was memorable for the sheer number of 959s undergoing restoration and recommissioning, largely the result of each vehicle's complete lack of use. I recall Stuttgart's technicians shaking their heads at such treatment.

At least the 959 achieved Bott's motorsport ambitions. For Le Mans, the 959 was developed into the 961, which in 1986 became the first four-wheel drive car to compete in the French daylong enduro, albeit using a much-simplified version of the road chassis configuration. Capable of 205mph on the Mulsanne straight, the 961 finished a commendable seventh overall, driven by Porsche racing stalwarts, René Metge and Claude Ballot-Lena.

More significantly, and again with Metge at the wheel, Porsche's mission to win the Paris-Dakar was achieved in 1986. Indeed, it was a 959 one-two, with Jackie Ickx taking second place, while Roland Kussmaul was sixth in a 959 serving as support vehicle for the two main works entries. The competitive adventures of the 959 are worthy of a wider feature, but it should be acknowledged Bott's creation achieved its goals in a way making other Group B creations, including those of Ferrari, look like underachieving, one-trick ponies, rather than prancing horses.



Above A glimpse of the 2,849cc twin-turbo flattie offering 444bhp and a useful 369lb-ft torque

To this specific 959, then. It is, in fact, the 959 S F9 prototype. At the time of writing, it was in captivity with high-end sports car dealer, Girardo & Co. In the story of the 959, this awe-inspiring Porsche is pivotal — you're looking at one of Helmuth Bott's development cars.

While it looks very much the full ticket, this is one of the earliest F-Series prototypes, of which just twelve were built, the first two being non-driving mock-ups paving the way for ten powered cars, which were further developed — car by car — into what we now recognise as full production specification. Distinguishing F9 further is how it is one of just three F-Series cars to have served as a prototype for the more hardcore Sport version of the 959, omitting the Komfort car's heavy adjustable suspension, air-conditioning, central locking and rear seats, among numerous other details.

PORSCHE'S ENGINEERS HAD TO WAIT UNTIL THE NEW MILLENNIUM AND THE ARRIVAL OF THE 996 TURBO TO FULLY REALISE THEIR AMBITION

The result is one hundred kilos shed from the standard 959's 1,650kgs. In the context of 959 production, Porsche built just twenty-nine Sports out of the 337 total volume. It's all relative, of course, but the 959 S certainly added a driver's edge to the 959's trailblazing technological setup.

Cast a beady eye and you'd be forgiven for assuming this is a production 959, such is the quality of the Graphite Metallic paint. Look closer, though, and the hooped rear wing could only have been shaped by hand, while the distinctly unfinished exhaust tips curve toward the ground. There are no protective wheel arch liners and the headlights are missing the expected sprouting washer jets.

The final production 959 S did away with the plush interior of the Komfort car, but F9 retains luxury carpets and deep leather sports seats. It's a reminder of how civilised the 959 was. There are more clues betraying this car's status as a prototype — while there are ducts and switchgear for an air-conditioning system, there is no air-conditioning compressor to create a chilled-out environment.

Where a 959 usually makes use of two rotary dials for the damping and ride height systems, F9 features just the one. And it doesn't function, thanks to the 959 S not having electronically controlled suspension (or 'active', as we would say in modern parlance).

There is also a third stalk on the steering column. It is marked *4WD*, which manually switches the adaptive differential to suit driver preference and/or conditions.

Typical of any prototype, this 959 was subjected to the full hardship of testing in all weather and driving conditions. Registered with the factory 'Porsche Weissach' plate (BB-PW 931, which it wears in these pictures), F9's function in the F-fleet was to stress-test the 959's transmission, clocking up vast mileage around the eight-mile, high-speed bowl at Nardo in Italy, plus countless abusive laps of Porsche's

Verbandkasten

Above and below 911 origins are clear to see, but the 959 was and is in a league of its own

own test track at Weissach. Porsche was confident enough and proud enough to loan F9 to the press, too. Proving the point, it starred on the front cover of popular German motoring magazine, *Sport Auto*. Inside, an extensive test and development feature was penned by Norbert Haug, the very same Norbert Haug you'll know as boss of Formula One engine programmes at Mercedes.

Prototypes very rarely escape from manufacturer captivity. Sadly, rules and regulations dictate most experimental cars are sent to the crusher. It's extraordinary, then, to know F9 made it out of Germany and to North America after its duty cycle. It was one of two 959 prototypes — F7 being the other — gifted to legendary Stateside Porsche and Audi concessionaire, Vasek Polak, in return for his assistance with the 959's development. That's quite a gift. It wasn't exactly the act of generosity it might have appeared, though. The factory was adamant the cars were for display purposes only, and under no circumstances should they be driven. Just to make sure, Polak wasn't supplied with either 959's keys.

Three years later, both F7 and F9 were loaned to the famous Matsuda Collection in Japan, where they remained on display for six years. Polak passed away in 1997, at which point the two prototypes were offered for sale in Europe by Brookes Auctioneers at one of the company's prestigious Monaco sales.

FIRED UP

Italian rally driver and sports car collector, Mauro Bompani, became F9's second private owner. It was Bompani who did much of the legwork to reveal this particular Porsche's part in 959 testing and development. He also managed to get hold of the keys, meaning the car could finally be started.

As the Porsche Museum restoration engineers I mentioned earlier would doubtless confirm, inactivity is a 959's worst enemy. With this in mind, Bompani commissioned RS Motorsport SpA in Italy to fully recommission his rare-breed Porsche. At a cost of thirty-three million Italian lire, the extensive works included rebuild of the engine, fuel system, master cylinders, brakes, clutch and even door locks. It was money well spent, especially considering Bompani kept hold of this Porsche for more than twenty years. Well-known Porsche collector, Georg Konradsheim, acquired F9 from Bompani in 2020. Acknowledging this 959's full significance and its place in the manufacturer's history, he invested much time and energy into the production of a one-off hardback book dedicated to the car's creation and its subsequent life as a test mule, as well as its time in private ownership. Finally, later that year, this special machine arrived in the UK, bought by a Porsche collector whose ambition was to own a 959 and, according to Girardo & Co founder, Max Girardo, "wanted a 959 to drive, rather than to keep out of sight."

Given its history and the hard miles it spent pounding Nardo and Weissach test tracks, not to mention the sub-zero

Above F9 is now residing in the USA, where we hope it gets to see some action in the hands of its new owner

climes of Norway's North Cape, it really would be cruel to retire F9 from service. It is, by any measure, a special car. It's special to drive and fits in well with Girardo & Co's stock, which recently included another Group B icon in the shape of a 1986 Lancia Delta S4. As the antithesis of what Porsche set out to achieve with the 959, the Lancia is a great comparison. Yes, it's road-legal, but you wouldn't want to go very far in it — an ode to the Delta S4 prototype known as 'Mazinga', the car was fastidiously restored to full-fat Group B Corsa specification by the world's leading Lancia specialists over the course of eighteen months. The process was managed entirely by Max and his team.

The 959? "You could drive it to the South of France in comfort," Max reasons. "Sure, you could do the same in an F40, and it would be an adventure, but you would be broken at the end of it." What of F9 in particular? "Fantastic. It was a 911 from the future, wasn't it? You can feel the lineage, the thunk of the door, the obvious 911 interior, but then this car is amazingly fast, even compared to a contemporary 911 Turbo. Deceptively fast, in fact, especially when compared to its rivals. The F40 is, frankly, a brute. The 959 achieves the same levels of performance, but in an entirely different and a totally deceptive way."

They say you should never meet your heroes, but in this job, it goes with the territory. The nineteen-year-old oik at the start of this story would be amazed to learn his 959 college renderings would actually come to life in later years. Draw it and you shall drive it, so it would seem.

Let's face it, meeting your heroes can be crushing. Not so with the 959. I've driven a few, from snatched drives to a full epic day on the North Yorkshire moors. Feeling both familiar and altogether alien at the same time is an unusual trick for a car. Familiarity, of course, is good. Step inside the 959 and you're instantly aware of shared parentage with the Carrera 3.2 and 930. The controls are great insofar as they're user-friendly. Visibility is good. Alien? Neither of the 959's stablemates — or anything else from the era, for that matter — goes like a 959. Fast? Yes, but in an otherworldly sort of way. It behaves kind of like a 930, which in today's motoring world is merely brisk. This is until 4,500rpm, when the 959's second turbocharger joins the party like a booster rocket. It's a level of performance still capable of impressing in the modern age.

The 959 does show its age, though. Cutting-edge it may have been, but its technology now feels very much of its time. The adaptive damping is somewhat stodgy and the steering lacks the feel and chatter of the standard 911. It's as though Porsche's engineers knew what they wanted to achieve, but had to wait until the new millennium and the arrival of the 996 Turbo to fully realise their ambitions. I'm nitpicking. Granted, the 959 was built in the 1980s, but it was the car of the future. It blitzed Autobahns at 200mph. It raced day and night at Le Mans. It won the Paris-Dakar Rally. Nothing Porsche built either before or after the 959 has come close. F9 played a very important role in this achievement.

Just as we finish taking our photographs, Max confirms the car is being readied for transport to America. It's time to leave. We can only hope this prototype's new owner will see fit to pay tribute to their new Porsche's legacy by subjecting the car to regular use. He's got the keys, after all. **CP**

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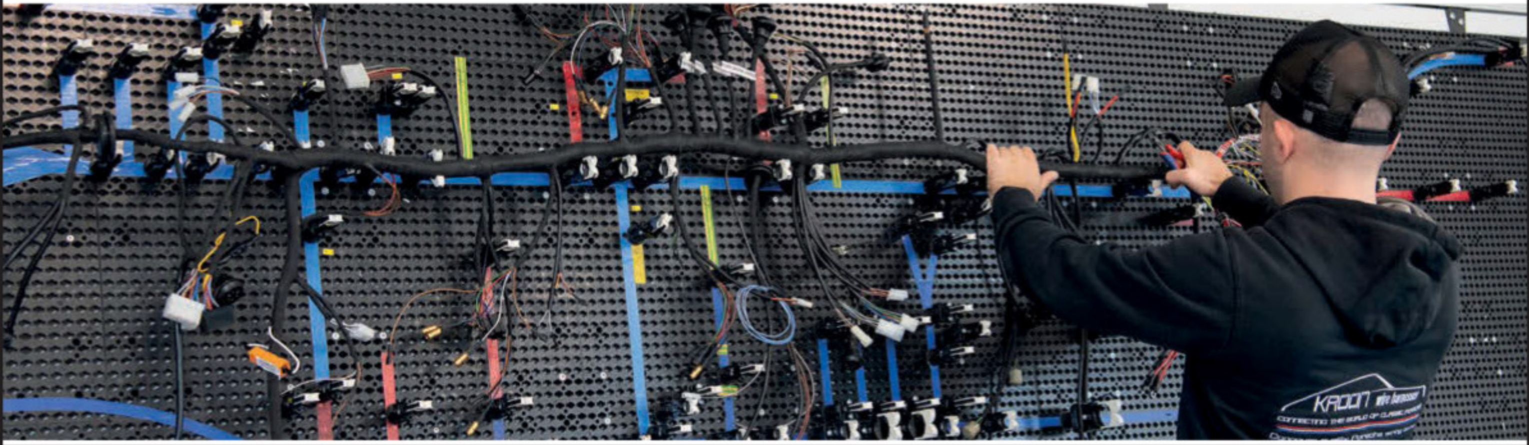

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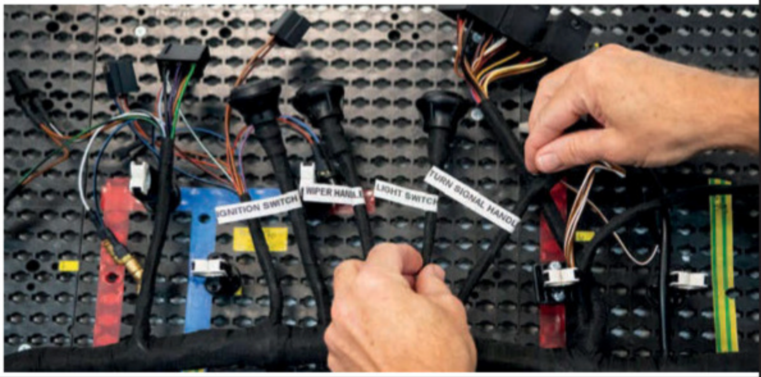
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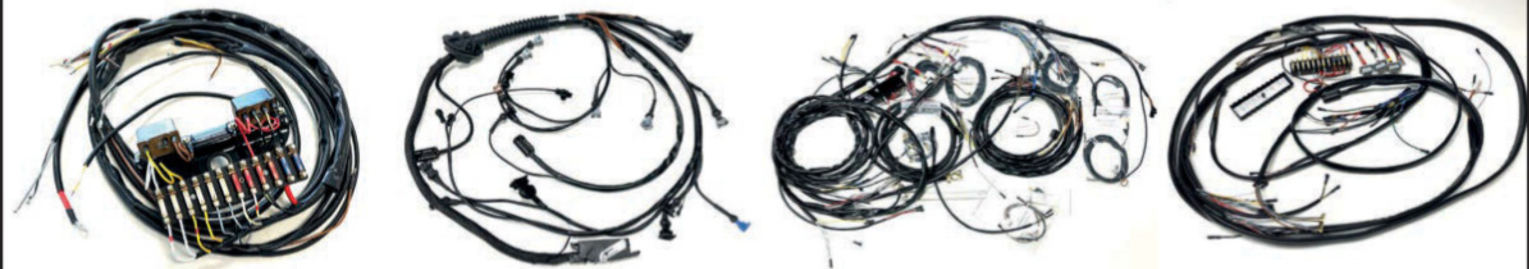

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PURPLE REIGN

Peter Weidemann's passion for the 914 has led him to reimagine not one, but two examples of the Targa-topped two-seater — one for the road, one for the track. We kick off our examination of both cars by sampling his eye-popping 3.4-litre street machine...

Words **Dan Furr** Photography **Ade Brannan**

Time and again, we've stressed the importance of starting with a complete car when undertaking an ambitious Porsche restoration or, as the case may be, restomod project. No matter how extensive the Porsche Classic parts catalogue, and irrespective of the aftermarket bursting at its seams with replacement parts for Stuttgart-crested speed machines, there are many incidental items unavailable new, resulting in the potential for owners to scour owners club forums and popular auction websites in the hope of finding the missing component, which due to its rarity (and the likelihood of it being in hot demand), may well command an eye-wateringly high price. Much better to start with a car retaining all its original equipment, even if much of it demands refurbishment.

Some people, however, like to do things the hard way. Enter Peter Weidemann, our 'man on the inside' of the Augsburg chapter of Porsche Club Deutschland. Yes, the very same Augsburg serving as home to two-time World Rally Championship victor (and current Porsche brand ambassador), Walter Röhrl, who enjoys leading club members out on Sunday morning drives after church — a religious man brought up as a strict Catholic, Röhrl was, in fact, under the employment of the Bishop of Augsburg prior to his glittering career at the top tier of competitive motorsport.

Peter is a fan of much of Zuffenhausen's output, but the 914 holds a special place in his heart, as evidence by not one, but two of the manufacturer's air-cooled, mid-engined, Targa-topped, two-seater roadsters currently taking up residence at Schloss Weidemann. They're very different cars, mind — one is a bright yellow track toy, the other a pretty purple road car. See if you can guess which is plastered across these pages.

"I assumed ownership of the car during the height of the pandemic," Peter informs us. 'Car' is a term used very loosely here. You see, what he really bought was a basic monocoque. "It started life as a four-cylinder 914 delivered new to the United States, as most were," he continues. "That was 1972. Fifty years later, it had taken on the form you see here, but when I first encountered this Porsche, it was stripped bare, free of an engine, no axles, nothing. It was being worked on by Robert Reichman, founder of 914SechsKult, a fountain of knowledge when it comes to these Porsches." The necessary welding was done, though Peter is keen to stress this particular 914 was pretty much free of corrosion, other than a small hole at the lower edge of the windscreen frame (a common complaint). As a blank canvas, it didn't get much better — though we always recommend starting with a complete vehicle, there's no denying having nothing but the bare essentials gives all the encouragement an enthusiast could wish for when deciding whether to personalise a Porsche.

IN CASE THERE WAS RISK OF PETER THINKING THERE WASN'T ENOUGH ORANGE, THE REV COUNTER IS COLOUR-CODED

"Robert and I talked about desired specification, which inevitably led to conversations about the factory 914/6 GT," Peter tells us. "Needless to say, this car received the same support Porsche afforded the GT at the factory, primarily a reinforced chassis, although I wanted the ability to remove the roof in whatever format it would end up taking." Indeed, an attempt to step inside the cabin without paying attention is likely to result in you falling onto the gearstick — bespoke impact protection tubework can be seen sprouting from the inside front quarters and stretching through the bulkhead to the damper domes past the engine bay. "All metalwork was plated and zinc-coated prior to paint."

The stunning paint job was applied by Werner Paege, someone Peter met through Porsche Club Augsburg. "He runs a workshop named AutoLack König. When it comes to custom finishes, he is a total genius. Of course, he required customer input regarding the colour." It's not exactly what you'd refer to as 'metallic aubergine', but then again, it's not straight metallic purple, either. A custom shade, then? "My wife, Claudia, loved this colour in the spray samples we were given," Peter grins. "She was taken with how it pops in sunlight. With this endorsement, I gave the go-ahead for the car to be painted in this shade from the floor up, every detail treated as if the car had left the factory in this colour." As a surprise, Werner painted 1:18 and 1:43 scale models of the car in the same purply hue for display on the Weidemann mantelpiece.

Facing page Lightweight, very quick and offering superior chassis dynamics to a 911

With the monocoque and freshly sourced exterior panels painted, the Porsche returned to Robert, who by now had drawn up a list of all parts needed to not only get the build going, but to get it finished. "This was taking place under the conditions laid down in the wake of COVID-19," Peter sighs. "Robert and I had to meet under the strictest of conditions. Nevertheless, he took delivery of the 914 and presented me with a detailed list of parts he figured we'd need to complete the project. He'd taken every bolt and every washer into consideration. No stone was left unturned. Fortunately, as a 914 specialist, his private stockpile of parts was able to provide much of what we needed. The rest came from a variety of suppliers. Mittelmotor, for example, provided the oil tank and various mounts. Rose Passion provided the exhaust, although I've since changed it to a Dansk part. Thortec Pedals yielded the chrome Porsche lettering for the engine lid, and Bug at 5 Speed sorted the short shifter."

Maxilite was selected as wheel supplier. As regular readers will know, the brand produces replicas of classic Porsche wheel designs, but utilising modern means of manufacturing and materials, thereby not only improving the integrity of the product (and therefore promoting better safety at speed), but also reducing weight. The rims Peter picked are Fuchs sixteen-inchers measuring eight inches of width at the front and nine at the rear. They're joined by Toyo Proxes TR1 (225/45 and 245/45 respectively) tyres.

New Bilstein dampers joined the party, as did adjustable anti-roll bars. Boxster brakes also make themselves known as Peter shows us around the car, though it's difficult for the eye not to be drawn to the orange interior. This isn't the first air-cooled Porsche we've featured pairing purple with orange, something many of you suggested was an acquired taste after we featured Paul Leyton's same-palette 911 earlier this year. "From the very beginning of this project, I knew the car would make use of orange leather," Peter says, almost defiantly. "The seats are standard 914 parts, but Robert modified them to provide a higher, more comfortable seating position. They also offer far better support than they did in

Below Mini-me and mini-mini-me for Peter's bookshelves

Above and below Purple and orange is a colour scheme featured in these pages previously, although not to an effect as aggressive

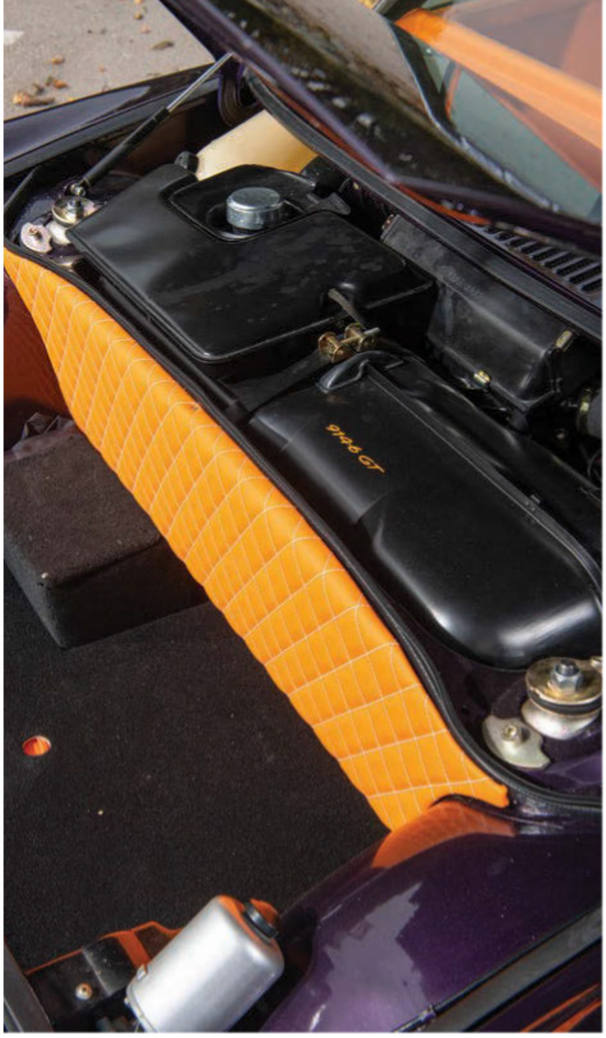
standard specification. Once he'd worked his magic, they were sent to Rico Guschker, a local trimmer who advised we use a much softer leather than I'd requested. He was correct to put me on a different path — after handling the leather samples he provided, I was sold on the idea of my 914 being upholstered in the same hide used during the production of new Lamborghinis." As you can see from our photographs, the Lambo leather was paired with Alcantara, but Peter wanted something different than flat panels of the suede-like material, which is why it was laser-perforated to reveal the striking orange beneath. Laser work of this nature is now commonplace on the aftermarket, but it's usually reserved for creative speaker hole design, not large dashboard panels.

IT'S A MISUNDERSTOOD AIR-COOLED CLASSIC REGULARLY DERIDED BY IGNORANT JOURNALISTS

On Peter's car, the effect is transformative, giving the cockpit of this boxy Porsche an added dimension. We expect the idea to catch on, although it would be remiss of us not to acknowledge the interior of the bright yellow pre-production 914/6 delivered new to Louse Piëch (sister of Ferry Porsche, daughter of Ferdinand Porsche) as a source of inspiration for what we're witnessing here in Augsburg.

Peter couldn't make up his mind whether he preferred leather-trimmed sun visors or to have the parts covered in Alcantara. "I got Rico to make a pair of each, but I settled on the orange leather." It's everywhere you look, including the custom centre console, dash top and the covering for the dash-mounted clock. "It's designed to replicate the look of a Sport Chrono stopwatch, a cool feature of the modern Porsches I've owned," Peter grins. He goes on to talk about other unusual accessories he had made to accompany the car. "Claudia and I each own a pair of shoes manufactured from this leather. I also have a matching belt and key holder, while Claudia asked Rico to make a watch strap from the same material. It looks great and even features an embossed Porsche crest, something applied at various points throughout the car's cabin."

PORSCHE



Above Yeah, but does your Porsche come complete with matching shoes?

Facing page 3.4-litre flat-six is a tight squeeze in the 914's cramped engine bay

In case there was any risk of Peter thinking there wasn't enough orange inside his Porsche, the car's rev counter is colour-coded, as is the embossed horn push of the MOMO Prototipo steering wheel. There's a retro-look Diez head unit with Bluetooth capability and DAB+ radio, the unit's fascia and dials cleverly set into a bespoke trim panel to give a flusher fit than the original Porsche radio offered when new. USB ports and buttons for the heated seat functionality sit in the custom centre console's upright panel (take a bow, Robert), which also houses oil pressure and battery voltage gauges.

NEVER MIND KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES – IN AUGSBURG, ONE MUST KEEP UP WITH THE RÖHRLS

Peter pops the frunk and invites us to take a look, which is just as well, because under Snapper Ade's lights, this interior is enough to blur otherwise perfect eyesight. Ah, hold up. More orange, this time in the form of a dividing panel between luggage space and fuel tank. "The battery is relocated to this end of the car to prevent corrosion on the standard battery tray, which is known for being a moisture trap and therefore becoming a source of great frustration for 914 owners. Additionally, moving the battery to the front of the Porsche helps with better distribution of weight, front to back, thereby improving the 914's already amazing chassis dynamics. It's a small change, but every little helps."

Taking a step back, we note the car's chin spoiler sitting proud beneath the flawlessly polished chrome bumper, which in turn, sits below purple-tinted indicator lenses. "It's from a Mk1 Golf," Peter explains. "I was concerned about front axle lift at high speed and reasoned a pronounced splitter or spoiler would be a good idea." Front axle lift? From a four-cylinder 914? Well, no. As the modern-Porsche-lettering decals declaring this build to be a 914/6 GT suggest, there's rather more going on midships than Porsche saw fit to bless this car with in 1972. Those bulbous wheel arches need a bit more than a flat-four to justify their presence, after all.

"With no engine in the car at the point of acquisition, it made perfect sense to consider installation of a flat-six," Peter reveals. "I commissioned Stefan Pfletschinger and his company, PS Historacing, to prepare an appropriate boxer for installation." The company is concerned exclusively with the preparation of air-cooled Porsche and Volkswagen engines for road and race use. Additionally, Stefan specialises in the restoration of Type 915 gearboxes, meaning he was well placed to supply a formidable powertrain for the square-edged Porsche. What specification flat-six to go for, though?

"Stefan had already built an engine and gearbox for my 914 track car," Peter confirms. "From this work, I knew he was the perfect choice when I was configuring the beating heart of my road-going 914. I was drawn to the idea of a 2.7-litre boxer and a Type 901 gearbox, but then I learned

Above There's an argument the 914 looks even better from the rear than it does from the front

about Walter Röhrl's 911 S/T replica, which makes use of a 3.5-litre flat-six." Never mind keeping up with the Joneses — in Augsburg, one must keep up with the Röhrls. "Walter's 911 develops in excess of 300bhp and masses of torque. I recognised how ballistic my 914 would be with the same power and spoke to Stefan to see what was possible. Straightaway, he advised making use of a Type 915 gearbox and set about oversizing an engine."

The result is a 3.4-litre powerhouse making use of forty-six-millimetre Weber carburettors and twin-spark ignition. The Dansk exhaust is stainless steel and gets rid of heat exchangers, although Robert fabricated a box to sit over the manifolds and transfer hot air into the cabin when needed. Oh, and, of course, orange had to be included somewhere along the line. It's visible on the engine covers and the fan.

FULL TRANSPARENCY

Not pictured is a bespoke glass roof constructed by one of Peter's friends, local to Bavaria. "Many of the 914-specific parts I needed for this build were sourced from Patrik Hess, owner of Hess Automobile in Fürth, essentially a breaker and restorer of 914s. I also gold hold of parts through Lothar Stöckl, proprietor of Kfz-Ersatzteile-Versand, a 914 and 911 parts retailer in Bempflingen. Both Patrik and Lothar are a fabulous source of components for 914s and have helped many owners engaged in the restoration of these cars." If for nothing more than to jog the memory of readers of a certain vintage, it's worth us mentioning Kfz-Ersatzteile-Versand is famous for its regularly published parts catalogue, which features an image of a truckload of 914s on its cover.

From derelict shell to a 914 good as new, this positively pretty purple Porsche has been completely transformed and now lives alongside Peter's not-so-mellow circuit-focused 914. That's the thing about this particular flavour of air-cooled Porsche — more often than not, we encounter owners in charge of multiple examples of the 914. They're addictive. They're also considerably cheaper than a same-age 911, but offer class-leading chassis dynamics. Pop-up headlights will always be cool, too.

The 914 is often considered the 'ugly duckling' of the Porsche family. In truth, it's a misunderstood air-cooled classic regularly derided by ignorant journalists as some kind of failure on the part of Zuffenhausen (due to the short time the 914/6 spent on assembly lines), when, in fact, the 914 was the most successful Porsche product prior to that particular crown being snatched by the 944 and then the Boxster (before SUVs became part of the Porsche showroom line-up). Indeed, with almost 120,000 914s manufactured between 1969 and the brief reintroduction of the 912 (the 914's direct predecessor) in 1976, we're often left wondering why it took the brand so long to revisit the concept of a reasonably priced, mid-engined, two-seater roadster. With the massive Boxster sales boom, it's not hard to imagine Porsche board members asking themselves the exact same question. The jury's out on whether they should have produced a set of shoes to match each car's interior, though. **CP**

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SUPPLIERS OF CLASSIC INTERIOR TRIM

SOFT LAUNCH

Kicking off the first instalment in our series of tests reviewing Porsche's back catalogue of 911 Targas in the design's sixtieth year, we hop into the 'soft window' iteration of the now iconic semi-open-top Neunelfer...

Words **James Fossdyke** Photography **Dan Bathie**

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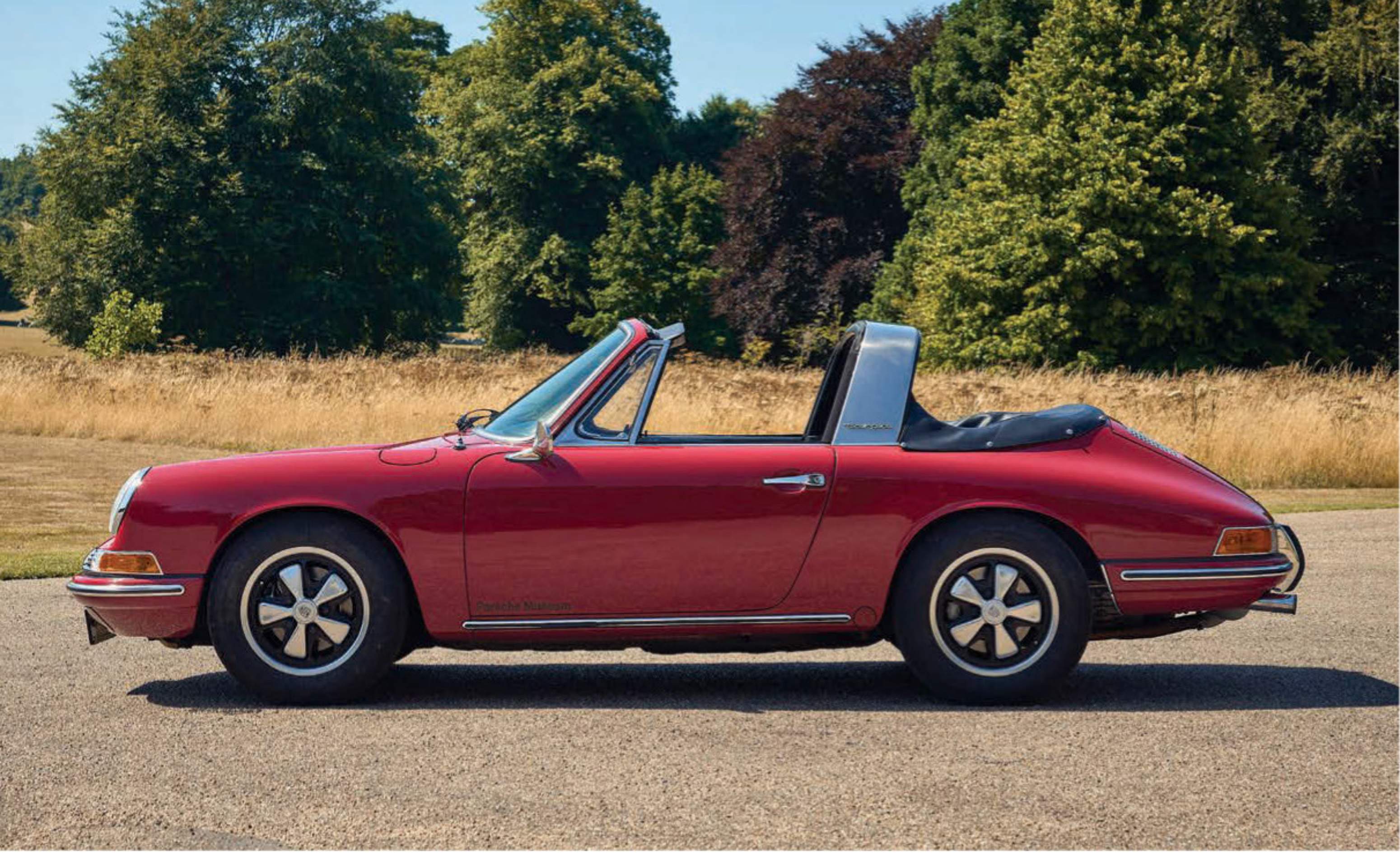

Above It's easy to see how the 'strawberry basket' jibe came to be

Porsche's patented Targa design was born to satisfy Californian demand for open-top cars, whilst conforming to rumoured Stateside legislation regarding a ban on outright drop-tops following their association with an alarmingly high number of fatalities. This ban didn't materialise, but the Targa project pressed ahead regardless, with its first production iteration taking the form of the 'soft window' design, named for its soft plastic rear window, which gave rise to the 'strawberry basket' jibe. Problems with the arrangement were quick to surface, however, and after just four years of production, this somewhat experimental version of the Targa was quietly consigned to the Stuttgart *mülltonne*. Time is a healer, though. Indeed, six decades on, the original production 911 Targa (and 912 Targa, for that matter) is a desirable air-cooled classic, but is it really worth investing your money in?

THE SLACKNESS OF THE GEARBOX AND LACK OF TORSIONAL RIGIDITY BECOME SOMETHING TO EMBRACE, RATHER THAN HARDSHIPS TO ENDURE

Let's start with the main event: the roof. Unlike the 911s of today, this roof is an all-manual affair, requiring more than a little elbow grease to remove. In the case of a conventional convertible, I'd be inclined to say this is no bad thing — in a classic car, an electric folding roof is just another thing to go wrong, after all. This 911 might just be the car to change my mind, not because it has some super-duper electrical system, but because the two-part, hideously complex manual roof is just such a faff. In fact, the only more complicated roof I've come across is the strange bikini arrangement in the previous-to-current-generation Spyder RS. I can't decide which design I like least.

Erecting this 911's roof contraption with a spare pair of hands makes life a bit easier, but if you're on a solo outing and the heavens open, you're going to spend a lot of time running from one side of the car to the other while getting increasingly sodden. On such occasions, it would arguably make sense to put the main roof panel in first, in a bid to keep the cabin dry, but this would be something of a pratfall, because it would make installing the 'soft window' part of the hood quite a challenge.

Instead, you have to start at the back, releasing the poppers around the rear screen's cover. There are quite a few of those. Some are hidden under the roll hoop, a feature which can leave you red-faced and somewhat more drenched than would normally be necessary. Once you've completed popping, you can unfurl the rear part of the hood with its soft, flexible plastic window. It's already attached at the bottom, but you have to manhandle it into position and then zip it (yes, you read correctly) to the roll hoop. You have to start on the left side of the car, then, unless you have the reach of a fully-grown gibbon, you'll have to run around the car halfway through.

If you haven't drowned or died of exhaustion, you can then set about mounting the main roof. It lives in the cargo bay under the frunk, meaning you'll have to once again run around the car to achieve access. It folds up like some sort of canvas accordion. The trick, apparently, is to stand with your feet together, rest the solid edge of the roof on your toes, and then

Above Few people realise Targa is, in fact, a Porsche trademark, such is its use on a wide variety of sports cars

Below Classic early 911 interior includes all you need for a pleasure drive

pull the folding crossbars to their fully extended position, resulting in a structurally sound(ish) panel.

This freshly constructed fabric panel has two locating pins at the back, which slide into recesses in the roll hoop, so at least you know you're on the right track. From there, it's a simple matter of ensuring the latches are in the open position and slotting the leading edge of the roof panel into place on the windscreen frame. Then, you latch the panel down and get yourself into the comparative dry of the cabin. Hopefully, you then have a towel with which to dry yourself off.

Presumably, Porsche referred to this car as its 'safety convertible' because nobody would dare take it out if there was even a hint of cloud in the sky. Certainly, it wasn't because the car feels especially safe. By modern standards, the lap strap feels woefully inadequate and the seats offer very little in terms of lateral support. If you were to roll this Porsche, I dare say the hoop would be somewhat irrelevant on account of the fact you'd already have been flung from the vehicle. Having said all this, the 'soft window' Targa offers significant benefits. For starters, it's absolutely beautiful. The shape, the proportions and the details are all perfect, and while the design is now relatively familiar, it must have been quite dramatic to those seeing it for the first time.

Our test car in particular, with its chrome trim, black interior and red paint, is the quintessential early 911 Targa and turned heads wherever I took it, irrespective of whether the roof was raised or lowered.

SHOP UNTIL YOU DROP-TOP

Secondly, the removal of the rear panel means this Targa feels much more like a convertible than its successors. There's no sense you're in a car with an oversized sunroof. Instead, you forget about the roll hoop and just enjoy the air whipping through the cabin and the smells of summer in the countryside. Or, more likely, the smells produced by a warm classic Porsche.

Thirdly, when the roof is raised, it doesn't spoil the Targa look. Some old convertibles look as though the roof was built by a boy scout who found a bottle of gin in his scout leader's rucksack and proceeded to drink the lot. Roof up, the early Targa retains its shape and looks glorious as a result, even on a damp morning in a provincial town centre. Most importantly, though, lowering the roof adds a real sense of atmosphere to the 911 of the 1960s. Don't get me wrong, early coupes are special, but truth be told, they aren't spectacular by today's standards.

The two-litre flat-six clatters away merrily in its distinctive, air-cooled way, and the exhausts emit a cheerful parp as joyous as the colours of a village pub's beer garden, but the performance figures aren't remarkable. With 128bhp and a long-throw manual gearbox, the Targa gets from rest to 62mph in a little over nine seconds, and while this is perfectly perky, it isn't what you'd call rapid. And let's not forget this

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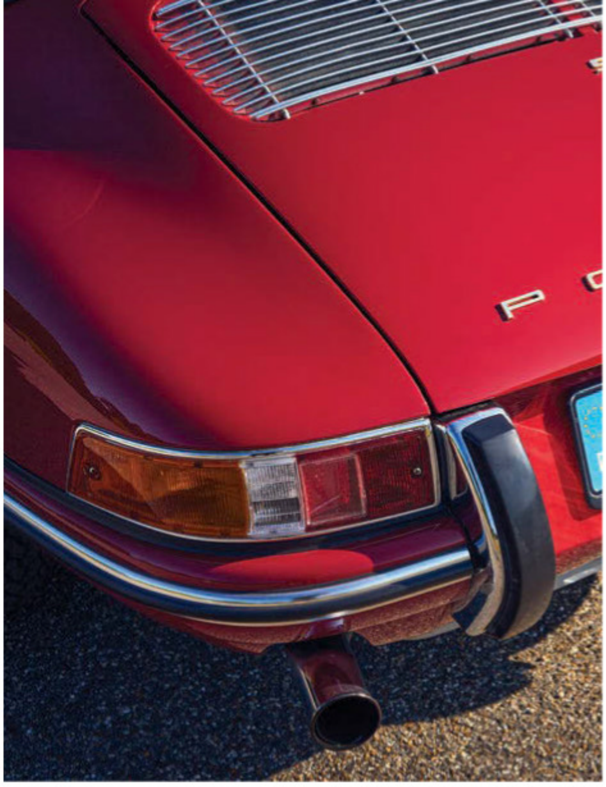

Right Two-litre engine is peppy enough for spirited Sunday drives, though the car's brake system and suspension takes a bit of getting used to

was a car without the safety net of anti-lock disc brakes. It might only weigh close to a tonne, but stopping an early 911 is a bit like stopping an ocean liner insofar as it takes quite a fair amount of forward planning.

Yet, with a Targa roof, such things somehow become trivial, and the 911 becomes even more of an event, even more of an experience to drive. When the sun is out, the slight slackness of the manual gearbox and the lack of torsional rigidity become something to embrace, rather than hardships to endure. You find yourself with the attitude of someone who does crosswords for fun, enjoying the challenge instead of suffering the frustration.

When you're at one with the car, it becomes an absolute pleasure to drive. Yes, you have to think ahead in order to drive safely, thereby ensuring you have much more space than you'd normally need between you and the car in front, taking into consideration the ineffective brakes and tempering speed to avoid feeling as though you'll be thrown from the driving seat. But if you wring the neck of this 911, the two-litre engine is more than punchy enough. And with only 1,080kg of car (plus another hundred kilos of me) to haul around, performance is perfectly fine.

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Similarly, while the steering initially feels vague, it is actually bristling with feel, it just takes a bit of getting used to. With no power assistance, the car feels very light around the dead-ahead at speed, but very heavy in slow corners, which isn't what I'd call reassuring, but it's fine. You can still work out exactly what the front wheels are up to at any given moment and you'll know exactly which side of the white line or cat's eye they've just trundled over.

The steering isn't the only informative part of the car. The engine sound tells you when you're pushing the mechanicals beyond their comfort zone, and even the long and seemingly quite baggy gearchange lets you know exactly when the lever has found its gate. The suspension, engineered long before man landed on the moon, lets you know exactly what those wheels are up to, where the weight is distributed and what forces the tyres are enduring. Sure, by modern standards, body roll is pronounced and the lack of support in the seat makes the drive feel more dramatic than it is, but this Porsche doesn't lurch about very much, not even in corners. Plenty of modern hatchbacks don't feel this planted — the early 911 adds a layer of feedback normally filtered out by new cars. It isn't uncomfortable, mind. It's way more absorbent than some of the later 911 models, but you can still feel everything. When you're driving on a road, rather than a track, this is quite useful.

Feedback, after all, is one of the most important aspects of a sports car, which exists solely to engage you in the driving experience. This isn't a difficult car to drive by any stretch of the imagination, particularly once you're accustomed to its quirks, but you have to pay attention and know what you're doing to make the best of it. This might sound daunting,

particularly to those used to modern 911s, but the two-litre Targa is brilliant at holding your hand every step of the way, allowing you to build confidence in its capabilities and learn its idiosyncrasies gently. The result is a great roadgoing sports car, one feeling at home in plenty of situations. But it's more than that. With the removable rear window, it's effectively a proper convertible with four seats, and though the pews in the back might be a bit small, they are at least semi-usable. Kids would be fine in there. Similarly, the luggage bay is primarily used as transport for the roof, but you could just about fit some bags in there. And if you aren't using the back seats for humans, you could always fill them with your baggage. Or, if you really want more space, fold the seats down and use the area as a big boot. Okay, I use the word 'big' advisedly, but you know what I mean.

Then there's the sheer quality of this Porsche. This is a car from before advanced robotics and computer-aided design, yet it feels as solid at sixty years of age as it must have done when it left the factory. The panels all fit together neatly and there aren't many squeaks and rattles. The doors close with a reassuring clunk and the materials used during construction are fabulous. The upholstery is all soft leather, the dashboard is chunky and brilliantly appointed with buttons feeling infallible, much like the 911s of today.

Therein lies the real magic of the two-litre Targa. Although this is the beginning of the Targa story, it feels just as captivating and as beguiling as modern equivalents. You can see the DNA, which has been passed down through generations of 911. This version of the semi-open-top design might not be the technical marvel its successors have become, but when viewed in the context of its era, it has much the same qualities. We often talk about classic cars — especially low-mileage classic cars — as being 'time-warp' vehicles, but this 911 isn't that at all. Yes, it has period foibles giving it extra charm, but if you can live with those, this car feels very much at home in the modern world. And that's how you distinguish the good from the great. **CP**

Above Early Targa roof workings are frustratingly fussy

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LOOK EAST

Classic Porsche heads to Hungary to get up close and personal with the 912s being comprehensively reimagined in the workshops of KAMManufaktur...

Words **Dan Furr** Photography **Máté Boér**

Secretive. This is the word best used to describe the operations of many of today's big-brand Porsche restomodders. Think Singer Vehicle Design, think Gunther Werks. Getting a behind-the-scenes view of what goes into the design, development and production of one the 911s reimagined by these companies is often met with a mountain of red tape, non-disclosure agreements and decisions by committee, the latter when it comes to determining precisely what it is media outlets are allowed to report on. Granted, for highly sensitive development work and new customer projects intended to remain private, an air of discretion is necessary, but we throw the towel in when told text will need to be vetted and approved prior to print. In fact, in some cases, we're told access to whichever establishment we're attempting to showcase can come only if we make use of a carefully curated set of photographs showing, well, what the business in question wants you to see. Often, these images have been pre-prepared before our intended visit and fail to paint a true picture. Not cool.

> MIKI HAS HAD THE GOOD SENSE TO SURROUND HIMSELF WITH THE BEST TALENT, RATHER THAN RELYING ON SUBCONTRACTORS

Needless to say, when there's clear risk of resulting editorial becoming the dreaded *advertorial*, we steer well clear, which is a shame because it's not as though we are denied access to these places. Moreover, we very much enjoy celebrating the people responsible for keeping the cars we love on the road, whether they're working at a small garage in England, a major restoration shop in Los Angeles, a parts manufacturer in Germany, a dealership in Australia or any other type of Porsche-focused establishment in between. Of course, we understand the need for privacy (selective focus?), and it's a given the bigger the company, the more likely commercial sensitivity comes into play, but not being able to tell the full story — warts and all — after exploring a specialist's facility does rather miss the point of the visit.

Thankfully, most companies operating in the Porsche sphere understand the value in inviting us into their domain and trust us not to do a hatchet job. We've been doing this a long time — we understand where commercial sensitivity is of the utmost importance. Perhaps the rise of the social media influencer and the apparent need for them to sensationalise everything in the pursuit of likes and follows has shaped what I've just outlined? I'm generalising, but an Instagrammer might not think twice about publishing what we would respectfully shy away from. On this note, how *do* they cope with their mind being blown eighteen times a day?

Print obviously carries authority social media lacks, which is why so many of you continue to buy *Classic Porsche* and its sister title, *911 & Porsche World* (the world's best-selling monthly Porsche magazine, of which I serve as editor alongside my duties on this title) in a decidedly digital age. It's also why so many specialist businesses operating in the Porsche world value the exposure these magazines offer them. Invitations to visit their working environments always excite me, natch, though the buzz is usually killed if an NDA appears. "Just sign here, please." Nah, but thanks.

As mentioned, big-name companies are the culprits, but I need to stress I totally understand where they're coming from, especially if they've been burned after putting their trust in less considerate journalists. Or influencers. All told, this is why KAMManufaktur's decision to literally open its doors to me was so refreshing. A serious name in the world of reimagining air-cooled Porsches, this Hungarian company is famous for exclusively championing the 912, which as regular readers will know, is one of my favourite P-cars. KAMM's invite was simple: no editorial meddling, no area of its production facility off limits, no control over the narrative, no attempt to prevent me from speaking to staff. Essentially, 'say what you see, however you see fit'. The way it should be. In a time before social media, we'd call it trust.

Over the years, I've been lucky enough to have KAMM development cars in my possession for extended periods. I've provided real-world user feedback to company founder, Miki Kázmér, which he tells me has helped shape specification of the company's production cars, which are now experiencing life in the wild following the first 912c customer delivery in Miami last year. Incidentally, that 'c' suffix stands for 'carbon', a composite material becoming increasingly prevalent on KAMM builds, so much so the latest incarnation of its lightweight four-cylinder sports machine is described as 'full carbon' and weighs a scant 750 kilograms.

Facing page Editor Furr flew out to Budapest and spent a few days hanging with the KAMM crew, including time at the company's assembly facility, as well as a drive out to Hungary's national park in the superb 'full carbon' 912c

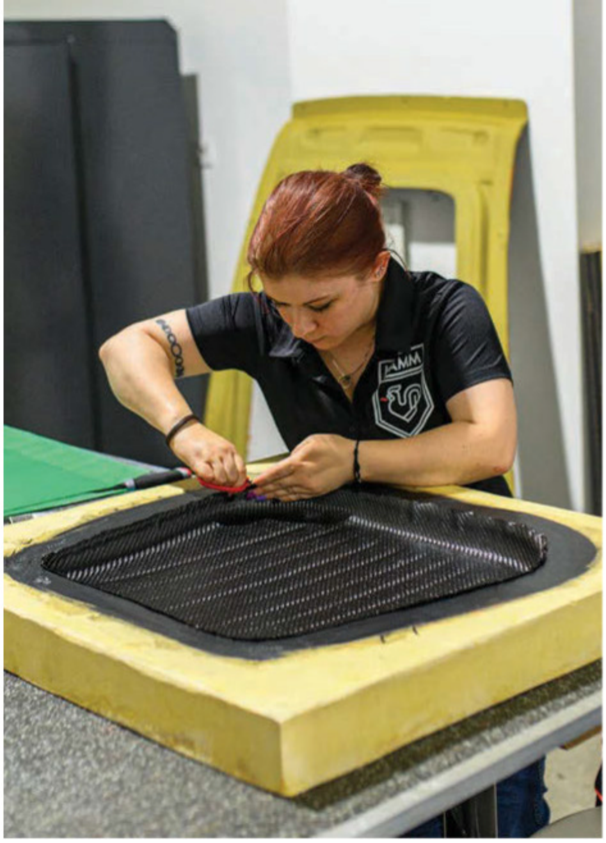
Consequently, it's bloody quick. Nimble, too. I digress. We'll come to my time in charge of the bright blue beauty (complete with intricate gold leaf decoration inside and out) in a coming issue of *Classic Porsche*. Suffice to say, I was handed the car's keys and took off in the direction of Bükk, Hungary's largest national park, located in the mountains of northern Hungary, some two and half hours outside Budapest and offering high-speed thrills by way of scintillating twisties carving through the region's gorgeous forests. And yes, I'm gagging to head back.

Not quite as picturesque, but by no means any less fascinating, is the commercial complex KAMM occupies on an out-of-town industrial estate between Budapest and Bükk. There is no signage, no indication of the work going on inside this building, which is carried out by employees with a wealth of experience working for some of the leading names in supercar construction and top-level motorsport, including the World Rally Championship and Formula One. I'm delighted to spot *Classic Porsche* coverage of KAMM cars framed on the workshop walls. I'm also honoured to learn I'm the first journalist to set foot inside the brand's inner sanctum.

I'm immediately met by a car many of you will be familiar with, chiefly through my reports of repeated time in the hot seat — it's the gorgeous green 912c development mule serving as a rolling testbed for KAMM's output. The car (inspired by the original 911 R) has undergone many changes since I first encountered it on the mean streets surrounding Goodwood back in 2022 (where does the time go?!). It's now powered by a far more potent flat-four engineered by famed Type 616 specialist, JPS Aircooled, and rides on TracTive semi-active dampers. The overall list of changes is far greater than the scope of this article permits, but with purely carbon-fibre wheels revealed at the recent Megaphonics event near Bicester, it's safe to say KAMM isn't resting on its laurels.

A warm welcome awaited me from members of the recently expanded KAMM team, including Zsolt Janvari, who joined from Dallara and was instrumental in creating Singer Vehicle Design's highly acclaimed 964-based Turbo Study. Miki has had the good sense to surround himself with the best talent, rather than relying on subcontractors, as so many companies reimagining air-cooled Porsches are guilty of doing. A number of these businesses spring to mind — virtual

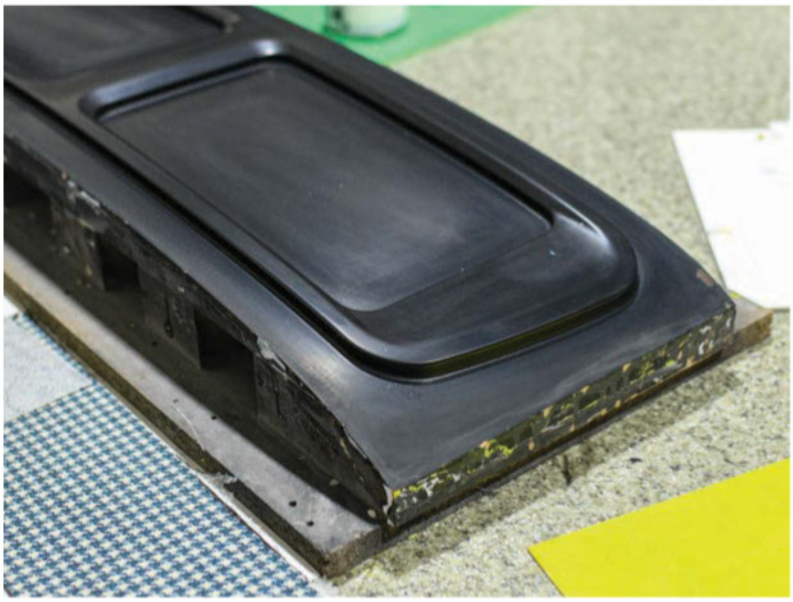
Above Targa body styling is available for both the 912c and the new 912T



Above and below KAMManufaktur possesses in-house carbon-fibre parts making capabilities

companies, if you will. Organisations not concerned with the building of cars, rather *project managing* the building of cars. This touches on one of KAMM's major strengths, not that Miki shouts about it very loudly. You see, a company overseeing the restoration of a classic Porsche, rather than doing the work themselves, has very little control over the project's timeline and budget. If a subcontractor says they're out of action for six months or suggests the cost of labour and materials has increased since the build began, there's very little the company overseeing the work can do about it. Similarly, quality control is limited, with much left to chance. Nothing of the sort occurs at KAMM, where almost every aspect of a 912c's development and build is carried out in-house. This extends to the company's carbon fibre components, which as intimated, are extensive on the latest iteration of the 912c.

A COMPANY CONTINUALLY THINKING OF NEW AND INNOVATIVE WAYS TO NOT ONLY IMPROVE ITS PRODUCT OFFERING, BUT ALSO TO EXPAND ITS REACH



Skilled technicians with extensive experience working with the lightweight weave occupy their own working space on-site, where moulds and finished parts are created to OEM standards. The process is in-depth, often resulting in many different prototypes before final fit and finish is accomplished. The mandate is a zero-tolerance approach to compromise in the relentless pursuit of perfection, which is much easier to accommodate when you're dictating your own timeline, rather than being at the mercy of a third-party contractor, as is the case with many concerns promoting their interpretation of a reimagined classic Porsche.

Miki has sought the very best in designers, engineers and craftspeople from across the automotive industry, each sharing his vision to build the lightest, most engaging versions of the 912. This includes former employees of Porsche Motorsport, as well as BMW and McLaren. "It is one thing to have the vision of the perfect lightweight driver's car, but quite another to take that idea to fruition," he reasons. "I'm not a carmaker by trade. I am a filmmaker operating a large agency employing more than a hundred people in Budapest. To make the best film, you need talent in both cast and crew. I take the same approach with KAMM. To make my dream cars the best they can be, I need the best people around me."

Zsolt is employed as Head of Production and Electrical Engineering. He has made a name for himself in both

automotive engineering and motorsport, most recently at the aforementioned Dallara. Prior to this, and in addition to his work at Singer Vehicle Design, he was involved in building the Aston Martin Valkyrie hypercar and worked in the world of Formula One for both the Haas and Williams Racing teams.

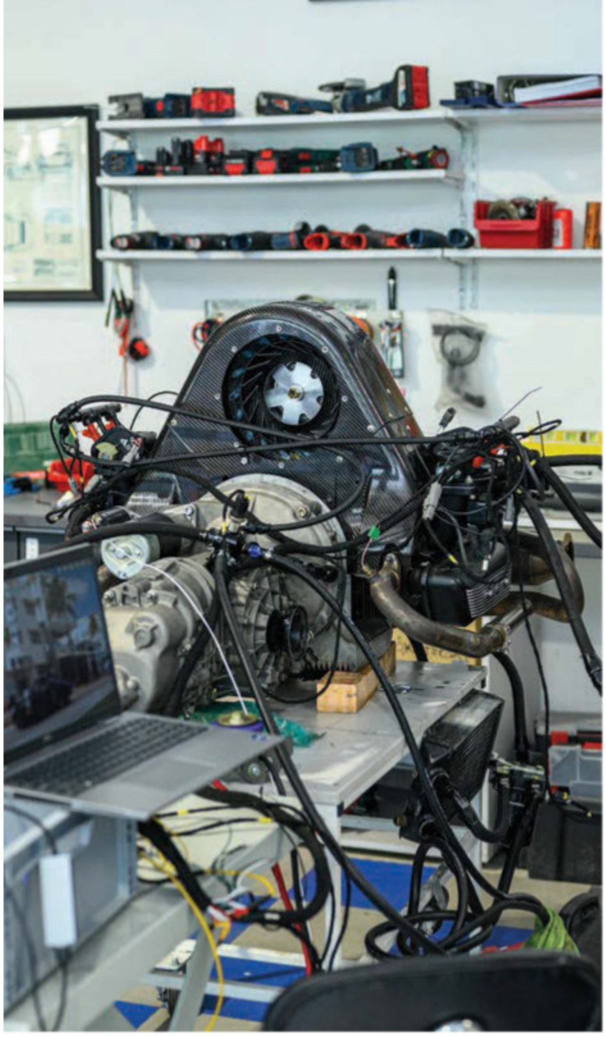
Sandor Kekedi is another recent addition to the KAMM family. He is the firm's lead engineer and oversees the carbon-fibre manufacturing department. Kekedi has extensive experience in motorsport, including a number of rally teams, and has worked on the development of a BMW i8 racing series. His knowledge and craftsmanship in the area of carbon-fibre sports and race car construction saw him create a restomod take on a BMW E9 GR5, an experience enabling him to help guide KAMM to create one of the lightest and most engaging sports cars currently in production.

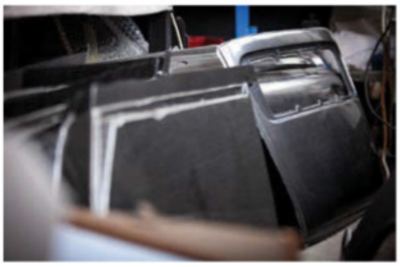
Sandor Pader is the Assembly Lead for Body and Chassis and has more than fifteen years of Porsche restoration experience to his name. Pader is responsible for carefully restoring every donor 912 ahead of its transformation into a KAMM creation and also works on the precise fitment of every carbon-fibre panel used to create the 912c. Gabor Galambos, meanwhile, is an engine builder and comes from a traditional motorsport background. He is famous in his native Hungary for his screaming 1.6-litre eight-valve Lada engines, which push 9,000rpm and generate 236bhp. "He knows how to get the best from a normally aspirated flat-four," Miki grins.

Balint Szabo and Nimrod Ludescher are experts in engine design, simulation and calibration for road and race cars and formed the hugely successful BDN Automotive. The pair quickly found themselves at some of the top businesses in the industry, including Swedish manufacturer, Koenigsegg. Today, Balint and Nimrod are an intrinsic part of the KAMM team, spending hundreds of hours to create engine configurations before conducting virtual testing of every engine on the company's dynamometer.

Dressed head to toe in denim, Miki leaves me in the capable hands of his crew and makes his way around the large KAMM workshop, checking in on the progress of in-build cars. Each promises performance, exclusivity and to fulfil the 'dare to drive' ethos he's keen to associate with KAMM

Above and below
Every room presents 912s in various states of restoration





Above 912 donor cars are kept in the KAMM basement

Right Headcount includes staff with extensive experience across various forms of motorsport and at many different supercar makers

products. He's a man with a lot on his plate — the US is a key market not only for KAMM, but also Miki's film business. The impact of tariffs on goods and services imported to the land of Uncle Sam has yet to be fully realised and, at the time of writing, is being challenged in US courts. Uncertainty is causing bums on seats to twitch in boardrooms across all industries, including those Miki operates in. Nevertheless, the show must go on, and the KAMM team rests safe in the knowledge its customer base is global, with examples of the 912c reserved for clients in the USA, mainland Europe, Australia and Singapore.

CLIENTS ARE WELCOME TO PROVIDE THEIR OWN 912, BUT FOR THOSE WANTING A HASSLE-FREE SOLUTION, MIKI'S TEAM CAN SUPPLY THE DONOR

This is a company continually thinking of new and innovative ways to not only improve its product offering (a process of evolution, rather than revolution), but also to expand its reach into different demographics of the Porsche enthusiast market by way of diversifying the 912c model line-up. To this end, Miki has given me an exclusive look at a Spyder-styled iteration of the KAMM flagship, and has just announced the 912T, a cut-price version of the 912c. Rather than this being a 'lesser' car, however, the 912T is a touring model, far less aggressive than its motorsport-inspired sibling, therefore designed for those who desire comfort when on the move over long distances.

Power is provided by a re-engineered Type 616 flat-four enlarged to two litres and making use of JPS Aircooled cylinder heads and pistons further modified by KAMM. Electronic individual throttle bodies are a key feature, while cooling is influenced by design of the legendary Type 547 four-cam, resulting in 163bhp with a redline set at 6,500rpm, ensuring civilised motoring when required, but exhilarating performance on demand. When compared to the noise produced by the raucous 912c, a non-valved exhaust promotes a relaxed touring vibe, while the adopted Type 901 transmission has been configured with a touring-specification gear set to ensure a smoother driving experience, though includes a ZF limited-slip differential and hydraulic clutch. Similarly, TracTive suspension has been somewhat softened from 912c specification by way of tailor-made one-way dampers. Granted, the addition of comfort equipment adds a fair bit of weight, but despite all this, the 912T still manages to tip scales at just 860 kilograms.

What isn't added is cost. At €245,000, the 912T rolls in at significantly *less* than the ticket price commanded by the 912c. In a way, this recently introduced KAMM product hierarchy reflects Porsche's approach to marketing its products back when the 912 was fresh off production lines — recognising the six-cylinder 911 was a far more expensive proposition than the four-cylinder 356 it was designed to replace, those wandering the corridors of Zuffenhausen identified the need for a cut-price 911 to appeal to marque

Above More than two hundred different specification KAMM flat-fours have been tested in simulation, leading to the 912T's optimised Type 616

enthusiasts unable to make the financial leap to the company's then new flagship, hence development of the 912, which in crude terms, is essentially a 911 powered by the 356 C's Type 616 flat-four. Hey presto! Instant classic with sales results to boot. Yep, the 912 comprehensively outsold the 911 during the early period both cars were in production, a near half-decade preceding discontinuation of the 'baby 911' in order to make way for the square-edged 914 in 1969. KAMM, therefore, is following a tried and tested path by offering two contrasting versions of its headline product, though I reckon there's a far less pronounced gap between specification of the 912c and 912T than there is between that of the 911 and 912, much to the benefit of KAMM customers.

You won't be surprised to learn Miki was pleased to show me his company's bodywork preparation and paint department, which is headed by a husband-and-wife duo well-versed in the art of perfecting the finish of classic cars. During my visit, they were working on a 912c Targa (another recently announced KAMM offering), with a selection of cars patiently waiting in the wings. At this point, the scale of the KAMM operation began to dawn on me — each room presented yet more members of staff, as well as several additional 912s in various states of restoration. The amount of product development taking place was also awe-inspiring. It's clear each passing 912c (or 912T, for that matter) will be more advanced than the last, which is saying something considering the 'full carbon' variant mentioned earlier is being heralded by the UK's motoring press as totally intoxicating.

There's more. Accompanied by photographer, Máté Boér, I make my way into what's essentially the building's basement. We fight our way through a mountain of scaffolding, which is on-site to assist with the installation of a powerful new air-condition system. Judging by blazing sunshine and temperatures nudging 34ºC outdoors, this project can't be completed soon enough.

Down here, in the depths of KAMM HQ, live a number of 912s acquired in readiness for forthcoming builds. Customers are welcome to provide their own 912 for conversion, of course, but for those wanting a hassle-free, turnkey solution, Miki's team can supply the donor car. They come from all over the world and serve as useful points of reference when comparing parts between vehicles, which is especially helpful for the design and development of incidental trim for finished KAMM builds.

Considering the comprehensive restoration and reimagining of the 912 under KAMM's watch, and taking into account the fact all work is conducted in-house to KAMM's exacting standards and specification, condition of the donor Porsche isn't of huge concern. This is in contrast to the kind of companies mentioned earlier, where project management serves as a substitute for getting hands dirty. No matter the level of corrosion a donor 912 presents (one must assume the worst, but hope for the best), the finished article is good as new. Better than new, in fact, when chassis redevelopment and enhanced specification is contemplated.

Though I had prior knowledge of the 912T's existence, the model was officially announced after I returned to the UK from my stay in Hungary, which was long enough for me to enjoy a guided tour of KAMM's restoration and assembly plant, a spirited drive of the first 'full carbon' 912c and an opportunity to enjoy a stretch of sightseeing and restaurant hopping in Budapest, a city I look forward to returning to in the not too distant future. What I didn't know was the fact 912T production will begin as early as the first quarter of 2026. This model will be built in strictly limited batches of five. Form an orderly queue.

Keep 'em peeled for my review of the bright blue 'full carbon' 912c. And Miki, if you're reading this, I'd very much like to head back and be first to sample the 912T. Its existence is no longer a secret, after all. **CP**

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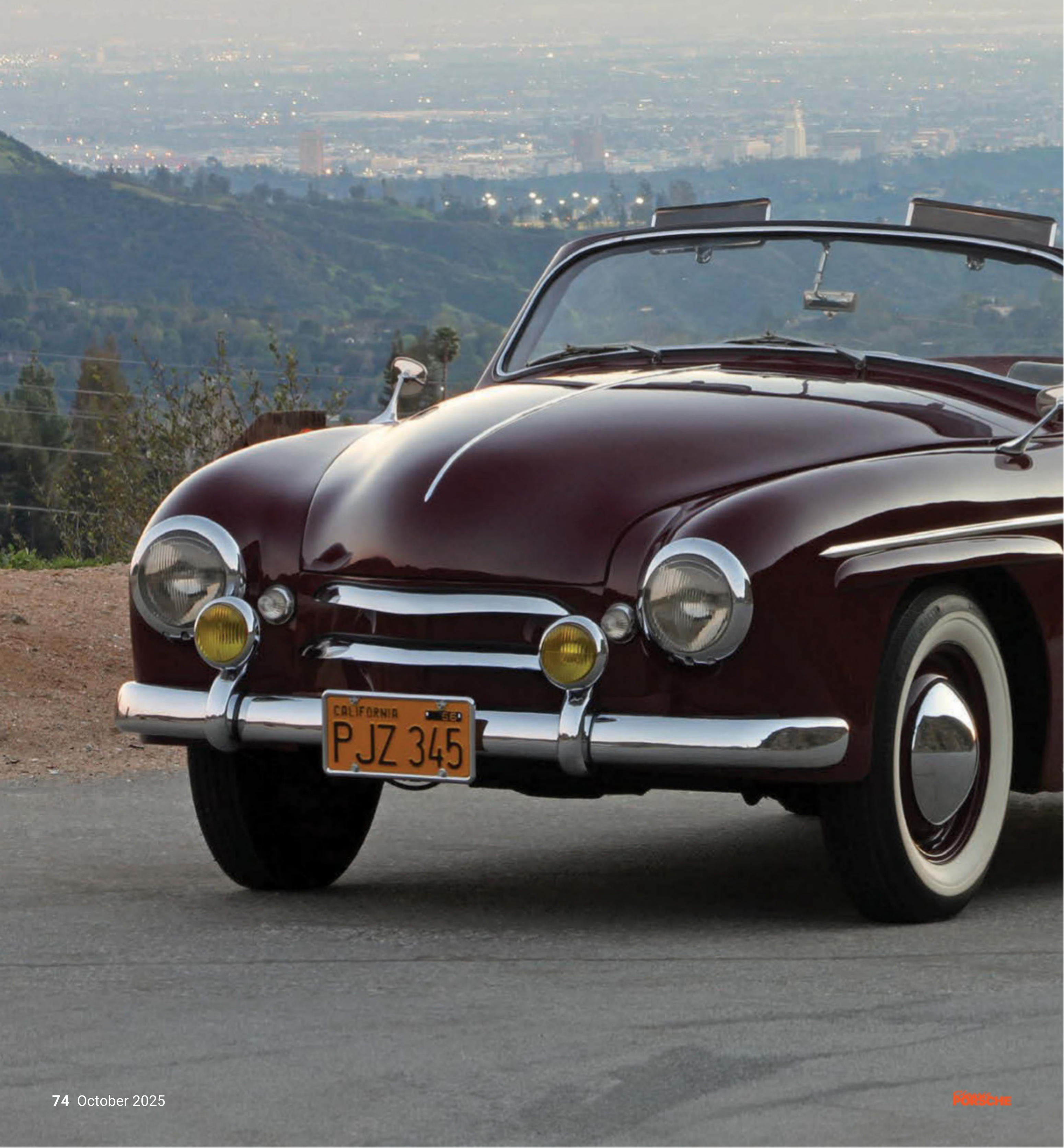
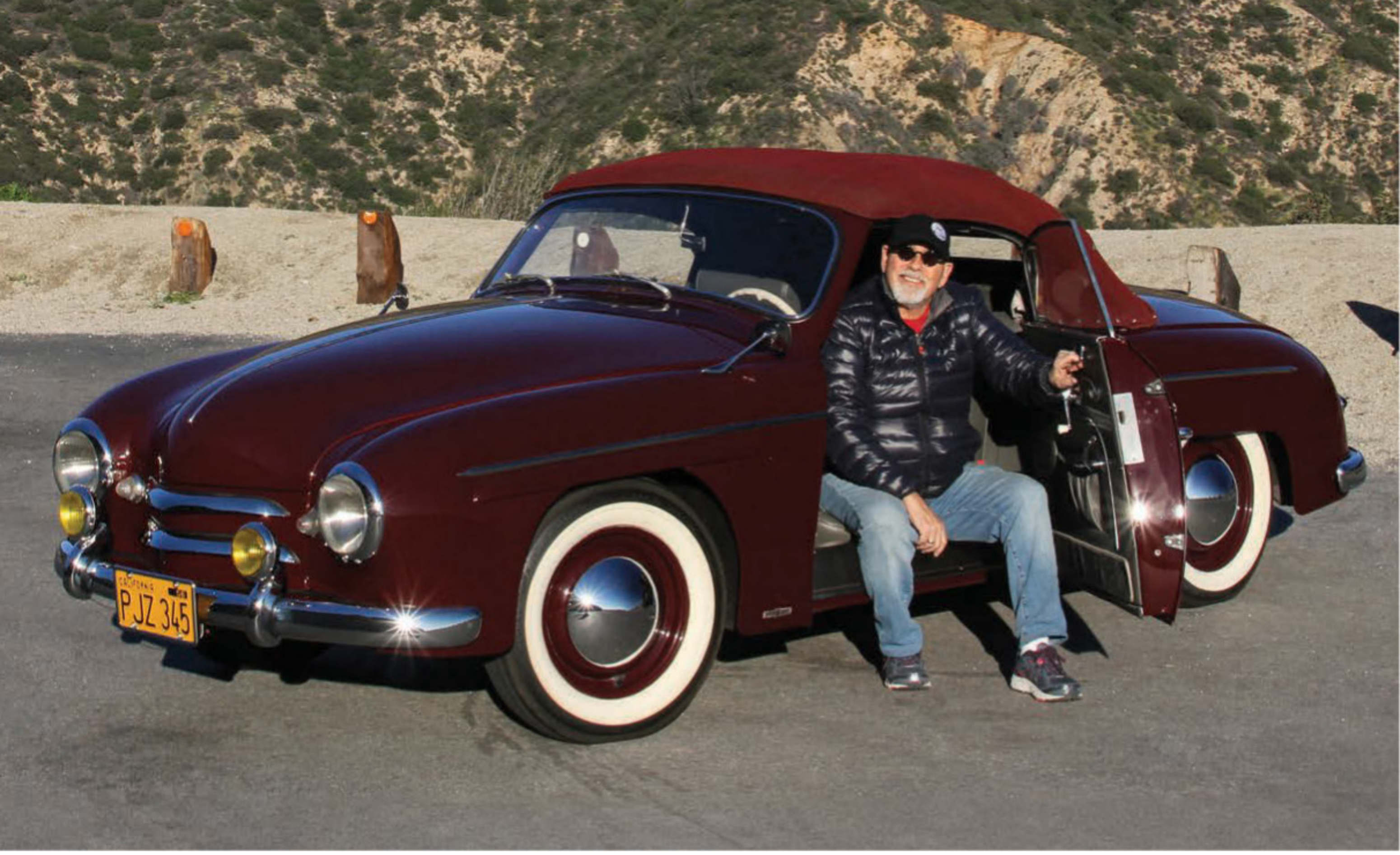
ROMETSCH REVIVAL

Scott R. Bosés is the custodian of an extensive car collection featuring a handful of unusual vehicles bearing a strong connection to Porsche. This is the story of one of the most unusual of the bunch, a 1957 Rometsch Beeskow equipped with a flat-four lifted from a 356 A...

Words and photography **Stephan Szantai**





Above At first glance, the superb Beeskow blends Porsche's 356 design with cues from the period's Americana, but this Cabrio is an entirely German production

Many years before the advent of the motor car, coachbuilders were well established, producing elegant bodies for horse-drawn vehicles. The tradition continued when automobiles appeared. Indeed, it was common practice for a buyer to order a rolling chassis and then commission a coachbuilder to craft the bodywork. These artisans produced everything from simple commercial vehicles to opulent luxury saloons. Prestigious marques, such as Duesenberg in the United States and Delahaye in France, relied upon independent coachworks to body their chassis.

HIS CARS WERE FEATURED IN *BACK TO THE FUTURE* AND *THE KARATE KID*, AMONG OTHER BLOCKBUSTERS

A decline in business followed the popularity of monocoque chassis construction. Though uncommon before the Second World War (the forward-thinking Citroën Traction Avant was one of the exceptions), the unibody design increasingly became the industry standard thereafter. In short, the marriage of body and chassis into one shell spelled the beginning of the end for traditional coachbuilding. Only the wealthiest buyers could afford bespoke creations, but few manufacturers were prepared to sell bare chassis.

Nevertheless, opportunities arose for smaller firms willing to take advantage of inexpensive production cars continuing to make use of separate bodies and chassis. The Volkswagen Beetle proved particularly attractive on this front. It was cheap, sturdy and widely available. A handful of ambitious companies across Europe seized upon the Beetle as a foundation for striking new designs. Among the best remembered were Dannenhauer & Stauss in Germany, Denzel in Austria, Beutler in Switzerland and, most memorably for our purposes, Rometsch of Berlin. Browse through your collection of *Classic Porsche* spanning the previous fifteen years and you'll doubtless come across articles about these vehicles, many of which were powered by Porsche flat-fours.

The fascinating tale of the Rometsch Beeskow (the subject of this article) is closely tied to two German gentlemen. The first is Friedrich Rometsch, who had established himself as a coachbuilder in Berlin in 1924. The second is automotive designer, Johannes Beeskow. Before the Second World War, Karosserie Rometsch earned a reputation for producing luxurious taxis, built on chassis supplied by popular German manufacturers, including Opel. In the years following the conflict, with the national economy in ruins, the firm was forced to reconsider its priorities, abandoning lavish automobiles and focusing instead on more affordable models.

In 1949, Rometsch and Beeskow combined their talents to create a 'Sport Cabriolet' based on Volkswagen underpinnings. This car made its debut at the 1950 Berlin Motor Show and captured the public's imagination. It even went on to win the prestigious Golden Rose of Geneva award at the 1953 Geneva Motor Show.

Rometsch Karosserie, which also produced a coupé version of the Sport Cabriolet, albeit in much smaller numbers, initially acquired chassis and running gear through

Above Sideways seat does its best to make use of the limited rear cabin space

Volkswagen's dealer network. This arrangement came to an abrupt end when the Wolfsburg concern's Managing Director, Heinz Nordhoff, forbade sales to the Berlin-based coachbuilder. Nordhoff viewed Rometsch's venture as a threat, particularly when Volkswagen was in the process of developing its own 'sporty' model, which debuted in 1955 as the Karmann Ghia.

Faced with this obstacle, Friedrich Rometsch resorted to Plan B: sending his staff to purchase complete Beetles from a sympathetic Volkswagen dealer in Berlin. When Nordhoff uncovered this ploy, he instructed his dealers not to sell *any* vehicles to Rometsch. Thus Plan C was born: employees were given cash to buy the cars in their own names. On occasion, customers supplied their privately owned new or used Beetles, which the coachbuilder then transformed into Rometsch Beeskows.

CHANGE ON THE HORIZON

The model remained in production until 1957, with only minor revisions. A single-piece windscreen replaced the earlier split design in 1953, while the dashboard evolved to incorporate a distinctive speaker grille reminiscent of the Beetle from the same era. Standardised components from other German marques were used where practical./ To this end, Hella supplied the 356-style taillights and turn signals, while door handles came from Mercedes-Benz. Then came the Rometsch Lawrence, styled by Burt Lawrence. Sharper, more angular lines were a strong selling point, but the Lawrence didn't replicate the commercial success of its predecessor — only eighty-five examples of the newer car were completed.

Ultimately, global politics sealed the fate of the firm. The construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 prevented many workers from reaching the factory, forcing Rometsch Karosserie to cease production of the Lawrence. Thereafter, the company continued for decades as a conventional body shop, leaving behind the glamorous world of coachbuilding. At the turn of the century, respected Porsche and Volkswagen collectors, Traugott and Christian Grundmann of Hessisch Oldendorf, became custodians of the surviving body bucks, tools, signage and other memorabilia.

The question remains: how many Beeskows were assembled? Opinions differ, but according to former employees, somewhere between 175 and two hundred cars left the small workshop from 1951 to 1957. About three dozen examples are known to survive today, a number potentially greater had the model aged more gracefully. Unfortunately, its construction method combined a wooden subframe with a steel wire frame beneath an aluminium body, a recipe for electrolysis and premature deterioration.

One of these survivors, the burgundy 1957 Beeskow featured here, belongs to Scott R. Bosés, who shares his retirement time between California and Florida. On both coasts of the United States, he has accumulated more

CALIFORNIA
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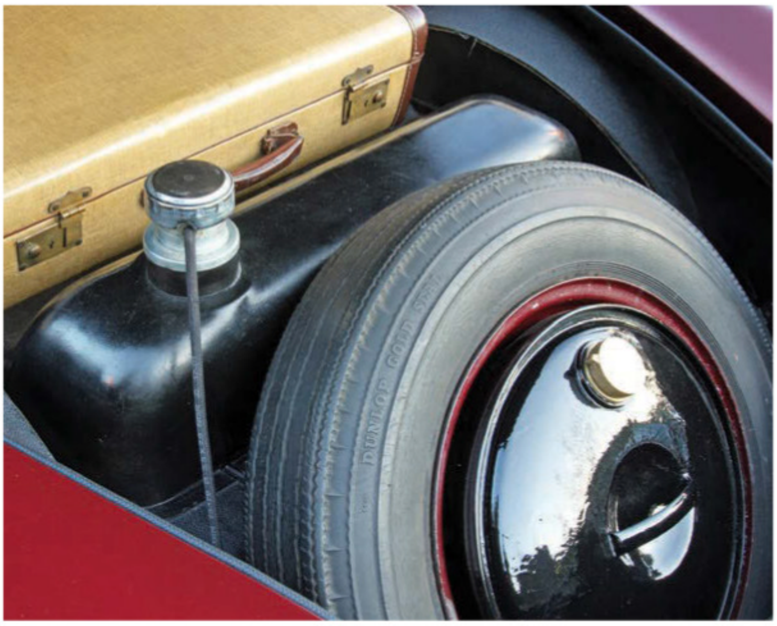
PJZ 345



Above Flat-four from a donor 356 A powers the Beeskow

Facing page After restoration in the UK, this coachbuilt classic now resides in the United States

than two dozen collector cars. Fascinated by mechanical workings from an early age, his first purchase was a 1954 Plymouth, bought for just thirty-five dollars. A short while later, he swapped a surfboard for a 1950 Chevrolet, before progressing to more interesting machinery, such as a 1956 MGA. This car helped him acquire a 1958 356 Speedster for two thousand dollars, a pivotal purchase steering him firmly toward Porsches and Volkswagens. A position with Beetle Imports, a leading independent distributor in Hollywood, allowed him to hone his technical knowledge.

Business ventures followed. For example, Bosés established a clothing company in the United Kingdom, expanding the enterprise to forty-three shops in just three years. Returning to California at twenty-six, he launched a business restoring Porsches and Volkswagens, occupying the same Hollywood premises he'd once been employed as a student. Being in close proximity to the entertainment industry, he was soon approached about supplying cars for film, television, and advertising. This became yet another booming enterprise, with his cars featured in *Back to the Future* and *The Karate Kid*, among other blockbusters.

Today, storage for his collection is divided between several facilities near Los Angeles and in Florida. Cars from his stable attend shows across the United States and, occasionally, in Europe. Hunting rare vehicles continues to be one his greatest pleasures. “My favourite car is always the next one,” he admits. Listing every car in his possession would take forever, but many have German pedigree, including a fantastic 1959 356 convertible, featured in an earlier issue of *Classic Porsche*. The list of rarities continues with a 1949 split-window Beetle, a 1956 DKW Schnellaster van, a 1959 Auto Union 1000sp and a 1960 Lloyd 600 van. Bosés also enjoys an American-made 1959 Devin D, essentially a fibreglass-bodied ‘special’ employing 356 running gear.

ATLANTIC CROSSING

Acquisition of a Rometsch Beeskow took persistence. He was drawn to the model's design, which incorporates rear-hinged ‘suicide’ doors. The example he finally secured previously belonged to renowned car collector, Dr Robert ‘Mac’ Jones, during the 1980s. It later travelled with a subsequent owner to the United Kingdom, where it underwent a comprehensive restoration in the 1990s. Later, the car was taken to Vancouver, Canada, before Scott succeeded in importing it back to the United States a little over fifteen years ago.

As far as the mechanicals are concerned, he refurbished the 356 A gearbox and installed accessories sympathetic to the period. These included a set of Hella bumper guards with integrated fog lamps, Denman bias-ply tyres and a VDO temperature gauge, the latter being an essential addition, given the Beeskow's lack of rear cooling vents. Following a

minor accident resulting in damage to the rear lid a few years ago, the body was resprayed — blending fresh paint with the two-decade-old finish would have been very difficult.

Part of this Rometsch's allure lies in its flowing lines and delicate detailing. The curved lip over the front wheel arches is especially distinctive, and it may have inspired certain Mercedes-Benz models introduced after the Beeskow was released into the wild. That said, no two were precisely alike, each being built to order. As a case in point, our star car sports twin polished aluminium 'moustaches' on the nose, though some cars featured only one. Bespoke aluminium frames surround the side and rear windows, though the origin of the exterior mirrors remains something of a mystery.

The interior is certainly more akin to a 356 than a Volkswagen saloon. The leather upholstery fitted during the 1990s still looks excellent, complete with its comfy Recaro seats. Some owners chose to add headrests found on Mercedes and Porsche sports cars. The most unusual touch is the sideways-mounted rear seat.

Instrumentation is by VDO, with gauges produced exclusively in burgundy for Rometsch. Opening the bonnet reveals an unusual breather above the fuel-filler neck, another unique detail. In fact, engines fitted to Beeskows varied. Although this cabriolet likely began life with a Volkswagen unit, it now carries a 356 A Normal flat-four. Rebuilt to standard specification, the 1,582cc unit produces sixty horsepower — for the sake of comparison, it's worth noting the 1600 Super made seventy-five. Incidentally, have you spotted the unusual right-angled carburettor adapters designed to clear the decklid hinges?

The lightweight aluminium bodywork ensures performance adequate for modern traffic, and we can attest to the lively experience of riding as passengers through Los Angeles streets. Bosés commitment has ensured this survivor remains not only intact, but is in fine working order. **CP**

Above A stunning air-cooled classic overlooking an iconic Stateside landscape

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BLUE FOR YOU

Finished in Ossi Blue and featuring a selection of model-year-specific details, this two-litre, short-wheelbase 911 S is one the best examples of its kind we've seen. It's very quietly on the market, too...

Words **Steve Bennett** Photography **Chris Wallbank**

It's time to catch up with our friends at independent Porsche restoration specialist, Carrera Classic. Having thoroughly worn out the claim Finns are the happiest people on the planet, I nonetheless detect a note of melancholy in the voice of Carrera Classic proprietor, Jussi Itävuori. "The weather is turning," he notes. "Autumn is on its way." The workshop beckons — there are projects on the go. Specifically, we spy a Monte Carlo rally 911, as well as the second and third examples of the company's signature 'CC' builds, based on the 964. Is there time for one last drive before inclement weather and the region's long periods of pitch black kick in, though? There sure is.

It's time to get up close and personal with Carrera Classic number one, which is to say, the very first 911 Jussi and his wife (and business partner), Raili, restored under the Carrera Classic umbrella. It's the car serving as the genesis of their unorthodox business model — it's a 1968 two-litre 911 S in Ossi Blue over ultra-rare 'elefant skin' interior trim.

The business model? To curate a collection of early air-cooled Porsches primarily for the Itävuoris to enjoy, but configured to their specific tastes, which, in a nutshell, amounts to 911s of the short-wheel base variety built between 1965 and 1968. There's the occasional 912 in the fleet, too, as well and Jussi's 1965 911 racer, which he uses to compete in the celebrated Peter Auto 2.0 Cup single-make series.

As we've outlined in previous issues of Classic Porsche, these cars are for sale, but only as and when they've completed the process of restoration and extended shakedown, which as you'd expect, can take a fair amount of time. Once a Carrera Classic car is released to the market, however, the lucky buyer will be securing ownership of the absolute best. There are no budget constraints when the work is carried out, no corners cut. Each build is accurate in every detail and, if there are accessories or modifications applied, they are in keeping with the period of the car. Yes, the Ossi Blue beauty is for sale, but we get the feeling there is absolutely no rush. On this basis, Jussi and Raili will have enjoyed their no-expense spared efforts before the car leaves for pastures new. And with restorations ticking over at four cars each year, there will always be classic Porsches to replenish those sold. Or not, as the case may be.

It is, of course, a privileged position to be in, and comes as reward for years of hard work on business ventures all over the world. In the same position, who wouldn't want to turn their passion into a profitable concern? Carrera Classic is the culmination.

Like all Carrera Classic restorations, and indeed all air-cooled 911s, there is history and there is a backstory. That's the thing about Porsches — they tend to invite the sort of owners leading interesting lives, or at least conjure up images as such. Snapshots in time, if you like. This 911 does exactly that, which is why it speaks to Jussi and Raili in a way the others in their collection don't. Not that they knew anything of the car's history when they spotted it in the classifieds of a magazine in 2004, while the pair were living and working in Paris.

> BUILT IN 1967, THIS IS A SHORT-WHEELBASE 911 S POWERED BY A TWO-LITRE FLAT-SIX, BANG IN JUSSI'S 911 SWEET SPOT

BASIC INSTINCT

"You get a feeling about a car," Jussi reflects. "This was one of those adverts. Just a few lines, but it really stood out. Raili speaks much better French than me. She liaised with the seller." The 911 was in Tours, the largest city in the region of Centre-Val de Loire, and belonged to an architect, who had used the car for more than two decades, driving it daily to his office, which is both very cool and very much typical behaviour of someone working as an architect. It's certainly what we've come to expect from owners obsessed with the balance of form and function. In fact, just about every architect I've ever known has driven a Porsche, including my old school chum, Mick, who drove his 911 SC in and out of London every day for twenty-plus years, racking up in excess of 250,000 miles in the process. Eventually, the car dissolved, unlike Jussi and Raili's Tours find.

"The fact it had been driven weekly all its life was reflected in its condition," Jussi continues. "Cars like to be driven, 911s especially so. Of course, this Porsche wasn't perfect, but it was mechanically sound and the owner had kept detailed notes throughout his time in charge, detail which added to care lavished on the

Facing page Originally supplied by Sonauto, this beautiful blue 911 S spent its first twelve years in Paris, before returning to the French capital after Jussi and Raili took ownership

car by previous owners. The price was reasonable. There really was no reason not to buy it." And just like that, Carrera Classic was born.

Jussi took the 911 home from Tours to Paris, which was entirely appropriate, because that's exactly where it had spent its early years, which we will come to. First, let's drill into the detail, because that's what Jussi likes to do.

Built in October 1967, this is a short-wheelbase 911 S powered by a two-litre flat-six, bang in Jussi's 911 sweet spot. The date puts the car in the 1968 model year. "Porsche started to get cost-conscious after that particular period of production," he sighs. "Plus, as engine displacement increased, the flat-six lost its revvy nature." The chassis number is 11800311. The engine number is 4080368, which denotes Type 901/02. Likewise, the gearbox, which reads 4280371. All numbers remain matching. In the Porsche colour catalogue, Ossi Blue equates to paint code 6803.

This 911 features the 1968-model-year-only 5.5-inch Fuchs wheels, as opposed to the skinny 4.5-inchers of 1967, or the fatter six-inch Fuchs of 1969. See, size really does matter. Ahem. Another feature of this model year is the black 'elefant skin' interior, which, as the name suggests, is the hard-wearing material used for the seats and door card trim. Why this finish lasted for only one model year is unclear, although — as Jussi has alluded to — when Porsche went long-wheelbase with the 911, costs and corners were trimmed back.

Motivationally, the 1968 911 S got Weber 40 IDA carburettors and new cams to lift power to 160bhp at 6,600rpm, which is quite the jump over the original 911's 130bhp. It's part of the essential charm a 911 of this era offers to enthusiasts of short-wheelbase 911s, such as Jussi. Also of interest is the 'less is more' approach to options. In other words, there wasn't really a great deal of boxes to tick. Will sir or madam be needing an antenna to go with their Blaupunkt radio? Yes, they will. Tick. Anything else? A Webasto heater and Dunlop tyres, although it's not clear if the Dunlops were optioned over and above any other

Above Bright yellow headlamps bring to mind the car's time traversing the mean streets of the world's most romantic city

Sonauto
PARIS

Above Interior benefits from a heavy injection of rock and roll

Right and below Sonauto dealer badge sits proudly on the engine lid

brand. The driver's side Talbot Junior wing mirror was likely installed on delivery.

This 911 was sold new in February 1968 to a lady in Paris by the city's Porsche importer, Sonauto. If this doesn't conjure up a romantic image of the French capital, then I don't know what will. Sadly, we don't know the lady in question's name, but it's not difficult to imagine this Ossi Blue 911 S cutting quite a dash on the Champs-Élysées, slicing through Citroen DSs and Renault 4s, doing battle with traffic circling the Arc de Triomphe. Indeed, this Porsche spent twelve years with its first owner, meaning it must have been a regular sight in whichever presumably wealthy district it inhabited. In typical Parisian style, it might even have been parked entirely casually on the street, maybe sustaining the odd scrape? We can only speculate. What we can confirm, though, is the fact this 911 remained in Paris until 1985 (via another couple of owners) after our mystery mademoiselle sold up in 1980. The car then made its way to Cherbourg before its sojourn to Tours pre-Jussi. Under Itävuori rule, this blue belter was once again buzzing around Paris. Jussi enjoyed city life with the car, but a return to rural Finland beckoned. The car travelled with the couple, serving as the first restoration project for what would become Carrera Classic. "It became the blueprint for our business model," he tells us, although he stresses, in those early days of the company, subcontractors were used for bodywork and paint, while trusted local Finnish Porsche expert, Jan Svenns, handled the engine, gearbox and running gear in-house.

A MARSHALL AMP LEADS A TOUGH LIFE, LUGGED FROM VENUE TO VENUE, WITH NONE-TOO-SYMPATHETIC ROADIES HOIKING IT IN AND OUT OF TRUCKS

Jussi's recollections of the restoration, which commenced in 2014 and finished in 2017? "The car was in amazing original condition," he remembers. "I was tempted to leave it as I found it, but that would have gone against everything we wanted to achieve with Carrera Classic. The paint was taken off by hand, whereas now we would dip and blast the bodyshell. There was some evidence of previous metalwork, but really, there was very little to do on the body, hardly any welding. There were holes in the bonnet, which had been

CARRERA CLASSIC
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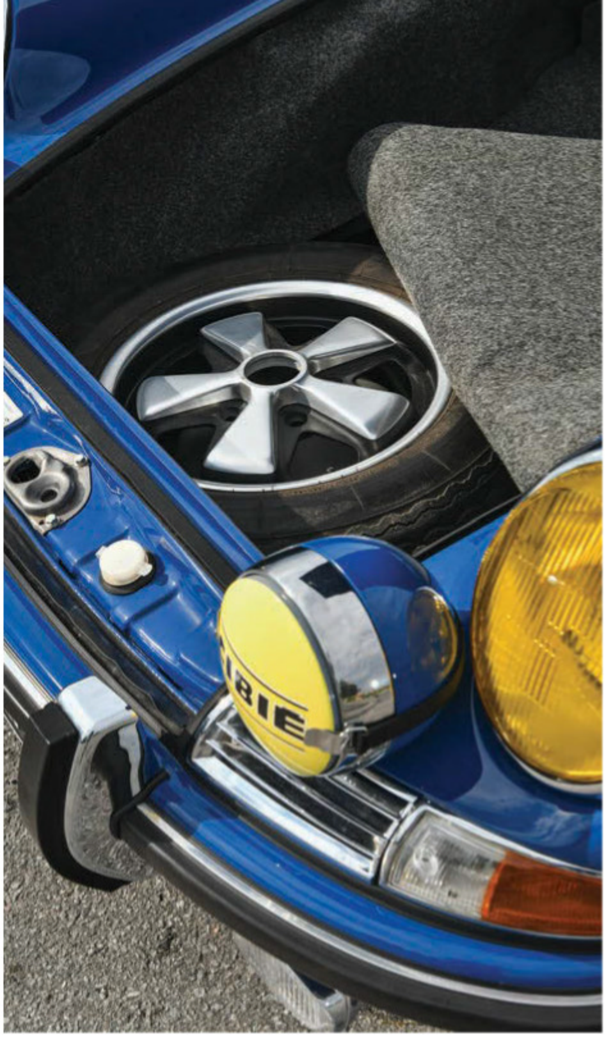
31 psi
2,4 atü
34 psi
1,8 atü
26 psi
2,0 atü
29 psi
CTU-4



Above Despite the car being in excellent original condition, Carrera Classic carried out full restoration of the body, interior and all mechanical items

Facing page Two-litre air-cooled flat-six is especially peppy in S form, as shown here

filled. These could only have been for spotlights, which were a very popular accessory back in the day. Likewise, the offside front wing was drilled for a mirror. Although not factory options, both features are typical of the period, which is why we fitted Cibie Pallas spot lamps and the Talbot Junior mirror. The paperwork with the car shows these parts were installed at some point in the car's past. To my mind, they are therefore part of its history, even if they aren't factory issued components."

ITS WILLINGNESS TO REV IS INTOXICATING, AND ITS ABILITY TO SOAK UP REGULAR REDLINE FORAYS IS ALL PART OF THE 911 EXPERIENCE

The engine and gearbox received a full rebuild, their respective conditions reflected by mileage, which now reads 130,000 kilometres (approximately seventy-three thousand miles). "We could probably have left them as they were, but that's not Carrera Classic builds are about. They're supposed to be absolutely spot-on. For this reason, we conducted a full overhaul of both the transmission and the flat-six." The interior was also in remarkably good shape, a nod to the hard wearing 'elefant skin' trim. "The seats were amazing, as was most of the interior, which still had the original door panels, complete with the hand-written name of the guy who fitted them at the factory. Dates were scribbled, too. That said, there were some aspects of the cabin in need of repair," Jussi relates. "The problem I encountered was not being able to get hold of the 'elefant skin' material. It was essentially only used for a single model year and seldom selected by Porsche customers. I can't recall seeing it applied to any other of the manufacturer's cars, let alone those produced by other brands." A eureka moment followed. A very rock 'n' roll eureka moment, in fact.

Budding axeman that he is, Jussi found himself in a guitar shop in London while the restoration was taking place. While perusing the various Gibsons and Fenders on display, his eye was drawn to a Marshall amplifier and its robust covering of, well, pretty much the very same 'elefant skin' seen in his 911. A Marshall amp leads a tough life, especially when on the road, lugged from venue to venue, with none-too-sympathetic roadies hoiking it in and out of trucks. "I contacted Marshall, got hold of their supplier and pretty much bought up everything they had," Jussi laughs. Question is, though, does all this mean his 911's interior now goes up to eleven?

As for the rest of the build, it's all in the detail. Jussi points out the correct stickers on the engine lid slam panel — they feature a red edge, rather than black. There's also a gold Sonauto badge on the engine lid and a Sonauto tag riveted to the inside, exhibiting the car's vital statistics. Crucially, as with all Carrera Classic restorations, the Webasto heater is fully functioning. No doubt, many other restorers would have removed the part.

This 911 looks great, too. Ossi Blue is a relatively unusual

PORSCHE
CTU-40

colour for the period, and there is never a situation when the yellow lenses in the headlights and the spots is anything less than very cool, evoking rally stages or scenes of cutting through Paris at night, perhaps through the city's many tunnels? Even in the early morning, *Rendez-vous* style? Nobody seems to know what car was used for the movie's epic drive across the city. A Porsche, perhaps?

It would certainly fit in with Jussi's assessment of the driving experience in what he professes to being his favourite Carrera Classic 911. "It's really fun to drive," he beams. Getting to the nitty gritty, he explains the magic of this car is its two-litre engine, which makes its power through peaky high revs. "Once Porsche started to increase capacity to 2.2 litres and beyond, its flat-sixes produced more power, of course, and they were more drivable because more capacity means more torque, but they lost top-end output, which is what makes these two-litre, 160bhp S engines my favourite." To demonstrate, he drops the 901 gearbox down a cog and lets the engine shriek around to its near 7,000rpm redline. He's right, of course. For sheer fun, the short-wheelbase 911 S is very hard to beat. Its willingness to rev is intoxicating, and its ability to soak up regular redline forays is all part of the early 911 experience. When new, there wasn't another engine like it. Not even those Italian stallions could hold a candle to the 911 and its air-cooled flat-six.

Whisper it, but this frankly gorgeous 911, restored to its full glory, is currently for sale. Yes, really. Jussi has confirmed it's time for the car to move on. He might not be making a big song and dance about the fact, but this Ossi Blue Porsche could be yours. The price? We don't talk about such grubby matters. That's between (maybe) you and Carrera Classic, but one thing we can say for certain is that whatever the figure is, in today's Porsche retro and resto climate, you wouldn't be able to build similar for anything like a similar sum. Carrera Classic has done the hard work, absorbed the costs and built one of the best examples of a short-wheelbase 911 S we've seen. Go grab your cheque book, people. **CP**

Below Jussi confirms this is his favourite Carrera Classic 911, but this hasn't stopped him advertising it for sale

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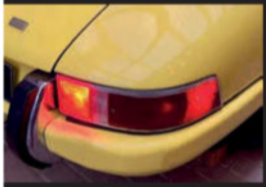

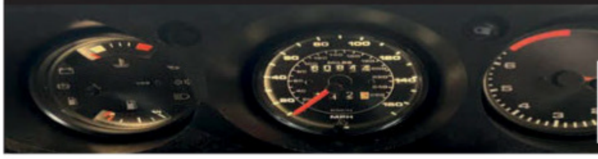

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UNLIKELY PARTNERSHIP

Bridging an awkward era for Porsche, the Zuffenhausen company part-engineered and part-produced the now legendary Mercedes-Benz W124 500E/E500, one of the niftiest cars of the Nineties…

Words **Karl Ludvigsen**
Photography **Ludvigsen Partners**

Above Fender flares mandating assembly of the 500E by Porsche are clear to see and accommodate wide wheels and tyres vital to delivering the desired performance

Facing page This image gives a good portrayal of the capability and performance of the 500E, a joint creation of Daimler-Benz and Porsche to kick off the 1990s in style

For Porsche's Michael Hölscher, this was his first major project. It was his opportunity to set up fabrication and assembly of a complete automobile at a time Porsche was suffering from a major fall in the value of the dollar, currency supporting Zuffenhausen's work for so long. This was 1989, when the company's new engineering chief, Ulrich Bez, was finding his feet, and while then CEO, Heinz Branitzki, was on the verge of dismissal.

> **PRODUCTION OF THE 500E BEGAN IN THE AUTUMN OF 1990 AND GRADUALLY PICKED UP SPEED, FIRST TO TEN AND THEN TO TWENTY CARS PER DAY**

The pair had an unexploited resource in the firm's Werk 2 facility, the former Reutter building at the heart of the company's complex in Zuffenhausen, which was just finishing its run of 959 supercars. A new project was needed. Porsche's manufacturing facilities (both old and new) were noticeably underutilised. This led to an aggressive effort to sell not only engineering capacity, but also production capacity to other car makers. Consequently, negotiations beginning in 1988 led to the signing of a contract (on March 19th 1990) committing Porsche to production of a special car. It would be implemented for none other than Porsche's Stuttgart neighbour, Daimler-Benz and would exploit the availability of the Reutter building, formerly housing the Porsche team following its return to Stuttgart in the early 1950s.

The car Hölscher would oversee build of in Werk 2 would address a gap in the market niggling Mercedes-Benz dealers in the United States. They had done well with the 'Baby Benz' W201 and its sporting version, the Cosworth-fettled 190E 2.3-16, which boasted an aerodynamic design and sixteen-valve cylinder head. Its later counterpart, the W124 E-Class sedan, had a worthy-but-unexciting engine range topping out at a straight six. Why not, asked the dealers, put a V8 in there? Bigger Mercedes products carried a V8, after all. Popping one in the E-Class body made a lot of sense.

Surely, Mercedes engineers at Untertürkheim were up to the job? Well, yes, but both the then new SL and S-Class were in the prime of their development phase. Both had been planned for their respective world premieres much earlier. The S-Class was supposed to be at the IAA show (Germany's leading international automotive trade fair) in September 1989, but major problems arose during a board trip to Hockenheim in mid-1988. All members of the board declared the model unsuitable for sale. Also, a new engine generation was in development. Daimler-Benz pressed pause.

The company struggled with its split locations — supplementing the traditional Stuttgart-Untertürkheim works was a newer campus in Sindelfingen, established to specialise in body design and production. In this situation, the Porsche Development Centre at Weissach made the impossible possible. Extensive body modifications, many component adjustments, the integration of a large V8 engine, the chassis of the new SL and the entire accompanying electrical system could all be implemented under the care of Hölscher's team. Project 500E was go.

For both Porsche and Mercedes, use of a CAN bus

Top Readying another 500E for its return to Sindelfingen for final checks was a ritual for every car in a production run exceeding 10,000

Right Trollies at Zuffenhausen moved 500E monocoques during their assembly from parts supplied by Daimler-Benz

system for the engine was new territory. Furthermore, the responsibility of testing was assigned to Weissach. External design and aerodynamic development of the 500E and its style-defining trades remained in the hands of the crew at Sindelfingen, although implemented by the Porsche team. As a high-performance five-litre V8-powered version of the W124 E-Class, the 500E marked the first installation of an eight-cylinder powerplant in a mid-sized Mercedes.

The saga of the 500E started in the spring of 1988 with a development contract in which Daimler-Benz AG commissioned Porsche AG with "the design and test-engineering series development of a W124 sedan with the M119 five-litre V8 four-valve engine." This was followed by a firm contract in March 1990 for the production of the described vehicle by Porsche, where the 500E was awarded the official title Project 2758 in the list of Porsche projects beginning with Project 7 in 1930. Features of the thirty-two-valve 4,973cc M119 V8 included Bosch LH-Jetronic injection, variable inlet valve timing and a redesigned intake manifold with longer runners contributing to output of 322bhp at 5,700rpm and an additional 22lb-ft torque, developing a maximum 354lb-ft at 3,900rpm. A 23.8-gallon fuel tank exceeded the standard size for the W124-series cars. To handle the higher horsepower and torque, the 500E's four-speed automatic transmission was sourced from the 500SL, along with a final drive equipped with a 2.82:1 differential.

SEISMIC SHIFT

Like all other Mercedes transmissions of the period, the default starting gear was second, a move designed to ensure smooth acceleration. There were two ways to force a start in first gear: either floor the accelerator pedal, which resulted in a less-than-smooth kickdown, or by moving the gear selector down and over to B, then back to D. This tricked the gearbox into starting off in first, regardless of throttle position.

The differential's added heft married with a rear-mounted heavy-duty battery to help shift the 500E's front/rear weight balance nearer 50/50. In spite of an engine weighing seventy pounds more, this balance was achieved with two occupants and 175 pounds of luggage. Wishbone suspension pieces and steering linkages from the 500SEL were reinforced to accommodate the 500E's increased weight, which was 3,770 pounds at the kerb.

Porsche's modifications to the base 300E monocoque included splaying-out and reinforcing the frame rails, strengthening the firewall construction, widening the propshaft tunnel, modifying the front axle crossmember and other engine bay components to squeeze-in the five-litre V8. Due to shorter and stiffer springs with plastic buffers and gas-pressurised shock absorbers with internal damping springs, the 500E stood nearly an inch lower than the 300E. Hydraulic self-levelling suspension was standard equipment.

The 300CE provided 11.8-inch vented disc brakes at the front, while the 10.9-inch vented rears were the same as retarded the 500SL. Wheelhouse openings and rocker panels

MERCEDES-BENZ
MERCEDES-BENZ

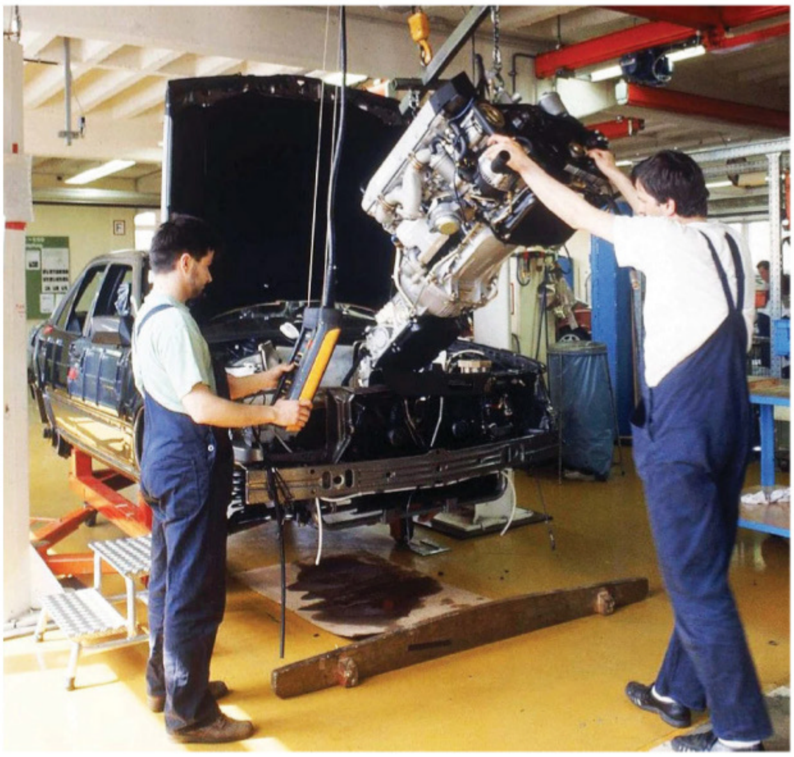
Above For Michael Hölscher, the 500E was the beginning of a career focused on development of limited-volume production cars

Below After a trip to Sindelfingen for paint, the 500E-to-be returned to Porsche for engine fitting

Facing page The V8 was a super-snug fit

gained flares to accommodate Michelin MXM 225/55RZ16 tyres on aluminium rims. A late series 500E rolled on seventeen-inch Evo II wheels. These wider wheels and tyres resulted in a 1.5-inch broader track. The 500E rolled on a wheelbase of 110.2 inches.

When the fender wheel wells were flared out to accommodate the extra width, the total increase merited Porsche's role in subtly reshaping the W124's exterior. Flares at front and rear were responsible for the fog lights having to be relocated lower into the front bumper. The TÜV (Technical Inspection Authority) imposed its requirements — due to the increased width and the maximum permitted distance between the headlights and the respective vehicle exterior, this was the only solution.



Before production could begin, hand-built prototypes had to be assembled and proven. This started as early as 1988 and continued through 1990. All in all, twenty test vehicles were assembled and tested. This was also the period during which Daimler-Benz discovered the wider front fenders of the 500E couldn't pass through certain points of its Sindelfingen assembly line. This discovery mandated a much greater role for Porsche, which helped moderate the effect of its crippling metalworker strikes and the costly consequences of the 959 supercar's exorbitant elaboration.

Having nurse-maided these changes through the two Stuttgart companies, Hölscher and his sidekick, Michael Mönig, could get down to implementing a system for creation of the potent sedans. Each 500E started life at the former Reutter Werk 2, where the basic body shell was completed. Starting at the end of 1990, individual assemblies, including the front end, rear end, main floor and side panels, were delivered from Sindelfingen. These were then adapted by Porsche and completed with other series components, such as the roof, doors, hood, and trunk lid, to form a bodyshell.

Four completed bodies at a time were transported on special trucks to the Sindelfingen plant across town. There, the body was corrosion-proofed and painted, giving it the full measure of rust protection and allowing buyers to choose from the entire palette of Mercedes-Benz colors. Then, the dedicated carriers transported each 500E-to-be back to the Porsche plant for final assembly. The needed Mercedes-Benz aggregates — suspension, interior and drivetrain — arrived crated in Zuffenhausen. Engines, transmissions and other major mechanicals were assembled by Mercedes and shipped to Porsche for installation.

Porsche's Werk 2 facility was operated by old-world standards. Cars were built on wheeled pallets and moved by hand from station to station during the assembly process. Electric spot welding was also done mostly by hand. Assembly took place on two floors in the Reutter building, with each vehicle passing through up to twenty individual workstations. Then another trip across town eventuated, back to Mercedes, where each 500E was subject to final inspection

before delivery or export. On average, it took eighteen days to build each 500E, though much of this time was consumed by transportation.

Production of the 500E began in the autumn of 1990 and gradually picked up speed, first to ten and then to twenty cars per day. Early in 1991, German dealers were selling the 500E, of which the Mercedes-Benz passenger-car engineering chief said, "with this model, we are sending a message to our competitors in Munich." American orders began to be honoured in 1992. By the time manufacturing halted in April 1995, the production total came to 10,479 units, 1,528 of which reached the USA. Demand remained consistently high until the end, with production output continuing to meet twenty cars each day, double the originally planned ten. Between January and May 1995, 120 last-request E500s (note the change of position for the letter E, consistent with rebranding across the Mercedes range of products from 1993) were produced. This concluded what Porsche's Klaus Bischof called an "outstanding cooperation with Mercedes-Benz." Even so, although the 500E had been a profitable exercise for the Stuttgart venturers, Mercedes was now turning to AMG as its performance partner.

After paying at least 134,520DM and adhering to the mandatory 1,500-kilometre break-in period, the proud 500E owner could lay claim to owning a true wolf in sheep's clothing. Accelerating to 60mph required less than six seconds. A significant number of buyers took advantage of the free-to-option Code 260, which deleted model-identifying badges on the car's boot lid, and thus drove their brutal Benzes incognito.

With its torquey eight-cylinder engine and tank-like build quality, the W124 500E/E500 was, for a time, the undisputed king of the road. Its driving enjoyment was not the sort of tail-out, tyre-smoking session available with an M5, but rather an impressive display of smooth, effortless power delivery and the kind of roadholding grip only fully be appreciated on the long, winding, high-velocity roads of the Autobahn and Autostradas of Germany and Italy.

"This is the first Mercedes to drive like a Porsche," said Porsche's deeply experienced Paul Hensler. Indeed, thanks to the low ride height, which worked in combination with stiffer springs and dampers, the 500E's responsiveness was decidedly un-sedan-like. Performance was super-sporting, with a standing quarter-mile despatched in the low fourteen seconds. Although the 500E adhered to the industry-agreed governed maximum speed (for sedans) of 155mph, actual capability was 165mph with standard gearing.

The 500E is authentically special because of its unique involvement with Porsche, something no other Mercedes model — past or present — can claim. This distinction alone makes the 500E desirable both to Mercedes enthusiasts *and* to Porsche aficionados. Even Porsche maven, Alois Ruf Jr, bought 500E to call his own. Yep, in 1997, he acquired an example with 100,000 kilometres on the clock. Finished in Brilliant Silver and manufactured in 1992, the car was used as his daily driver. Its philosophy suited him perfectly. "Unobtrusive in appearance, but when it needs to, it goes like hell," he said. The car has since covered more than 400,000 kilometres, thus earning a place of honour in the collection of RUF Automobile GmbH. Praise indeed. **CP**

Above Under the prosaic skin of this four-door Mercedes were many Porsche modifications to exploit the engine's strong output, as well as the upgraded running gear

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Presenting a magnificent Cabriolet that is finished in a black exterior complemented with a tan interior. Powered by a flat-four 1600 engine which is paired with Weber dual carburetors, and a 4-speed manual transmission, this classic is mechanically sound and deserves a place in your collection.

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The Coupe is finished in a red and complemented by a black interior and red stitching. It is powered by a 2.4-liter flat-6 engine with Zenith dual carburetors, and a 915 5-speed manual transmission. If you're in the market for a classic car then look no further than this desirable 911T that is mechanically sound.

For $89,950

2005 Porsche 997 #18273

This Carrera Coupe is featured here with 79,666 miles on the odometer and finished in its factory color of scheme of Arctic Silver Metallic complemented with a black leather interior. This well-equipped Carrera Coupe is ready to be enjoyed. It is also mechanically sound.

For $46,500

1988 Porsche Carrera #16154

This Carrera Cabriolet is featured with matching numbers and only 25,552 miles on the odometer. Finished in its factory color Black Schwarz and is combined with a grey interior. Don't miss out on this low-mileage Carrera Cabriolet that is mechanically sound.

For $89,950

1988 Porsche 944 Turbo S #18506

Presenting an extremely original and low mileage classic showing 17,116 miles on the odometer. Finished in its factory color Silver Rose Metallic and a matching Tartan interior. This gorgeous 944 model is a great addition to any collection and is mechanically sound.

For $59,950

1977 Porsche 911S Targa #18538

This slate grey air-cooled classic comes with its matching numbers, flat 6 cylinder 2.7-liter engine, a 915 5-speed manual transaxle, along with a removable top giving an option for an open-air experience. Look no further than this Porsche Targa that is mechanically sound.

For $54,500

1986 Porsche Carrera Targa #18504

This 911 comes with a removeable Targa top and is equipped with a 915 5-speed manual transaxle, along with a Flat 6 Cylinder 3.2-liter engine with fuel injection. Don't miss out on this excellent opportunity to acquire a highly desirable air-cooled 911 that is mechanically sound.

For $67,500

1973.5 911T Sunroof Coupe #18049

Finished in its factory color scheme of Sepia Brown exterior and beautifully complemented by a Beige/Tan interior. This California car is equipped with a 915 5-speed manual transmission, and Flat 6 Cylinder 2.4-liter engine. A highly desirable long-hood that is mechanically sound.

For $108,500

1974 Porsche 911 Targa #18366

This highly desirable color, Mexico Blue Targa, is fresh out of the dry state of Arizona. A full engine rebuild has been performed with a service receipt totaling $19,750. Look no further than this 911 Targa that is mechanically sound.

For $54,500

1976 911S Sunroof Delete Coupe #18133

Finished in its exquisite factory color Peru Red and complemented with a striking red interior. Equipped with a 5-speed manual transmission and a 2.7-liter air-cooled flat-six engine. This 911S is the perfect air cooled and is mechanically sound.

For $56,500

1979 Porsche 911SC Coupe #18625

Introducing this classic Porsche shown here with matching numbers and has only 87,442 miles showing on the odometer. It's finished in a dark red exterior and a tan interior. Look no further than this Coupe which is mechanically sound.

For $59,950

1975 911 Carrera Sunroof Coupe #18161

An extremely original air cooled coupe featured with matching numbers and 61,825 miles on the odometer. With only 395 examples ever made, this particular 911 is #287, making it a highly sought-after collector's item.

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A CUT ABOVE

Is the 993 Turbo special enough? Most would say yes, but Porsche Exclusive disagreed...

Words **Dan Furr, Richard Gooding, Emma Woodcock** Photography **Adrian Brannan**

There's a long hard arc, a subtle-yet-constant curve to its outer reaches. A horizontal slash of red, a deep, lipstick shade clashing against glimmering silver paintwork. Stare a tad longer, and a line of uppercase script murmurs out of the rear panel to spell the name of our favourite sports car manufacturer. Your gaze continues past the strip of lights to yawning, complex curves shrugging away from the monocoque to form the rear wheel arches. Broad-shouldered and close to the ground. There can be no doubt — you're staring at a wide-body 993.

Raise your gaze and you'll spy a vertical slab stretching from one side of the engine to the other before it plots a concave swoop toward a giant rear wing. This isn't any old 911, that's for sure. This is a Turbo. With 408bhp, 398lb-ft torque, four-wheel drive and total production less than six thousand units, the fact this is an incredibly desirable modern classic should go without saying, shouldn't it?

> BRINGING TOGETHER AIR-COOLED ICONS AND MODERN-DAY TRACK HEROES, THE EVENT WAS A PORSCHE ENTHUSIAST'S DREAM

Drink the details a little deeper and doubt begins to spread. Didn't Turbos leave the factory with a single-plane rear wing? Yes, most of them did. Shouldn't those exhaust tips be a pair of single squished ovals? Correct. Welcome to Porsche Exclusive and the sublime 993 Turbo S.

Porsche Exclusive operates from Weissach and creates low-volume runs of enhanced Porsche production cars. Over the years, the brand has delivered a colourful catalogue of showstoppers, including the 993 Speedster, 964 Turbo Cabriolet, 930 LE and 964 Turbo S Flachbau. As you might imagine, these air-cooled curiosities represent the rarest of the rare. Making Porsches truly unique, however, the division's Sonderwunsch (Special Wishes) department is responsible for one-offs built to exacting customer specification, thereby making a Porsche *your* Porsche.

Porsche Exclusive can trace its roots back to the origins of Porsche as a manufacturer. "In the beginning, I looked around and could not find quite the car I dreamed of, which is why I decided to build it myself," said Ferry Porsche, following development of the 356. His desire to design and configure sports cars to meet individual needs runs through the heart of Porsche Exclusive — dreams were already coming true for Zuffenhausen's customers as early as the 1950s, as demonstrated by production of a 356 with a body covered in faux fur. Yes, really.

By the late 1950s, the demands of motorsport, in which Porsche had already made a name for itself, were testing the abilities of the firm's products to the limit. Customers were requesting bespoke exhaust systems and other apparatus to help improve already impressive lap times, a mood reflected by many astute Porsche showroom visitors, who were taking advantage of discreetly advertised individual equipment promising to separate their cars from the rest of the pack.

From 1978 to the present day, special modifications and conversions to the company's series production cars are carried out under the Sonderwunsch banner, which gained worldwide recognition through development of a one-off, street-legal version of the 935 race car. Known as 935 Street and built in 1983, the outrageously powerful Porsche was commissioned by Mansour Ojjeh, the French Saudi Arabian-born CEO of aviation and motorsport investment business, Techniques d'Avant Garde (TAG), which owns a substantial part of McLaren and, of course, invested heavily in production of the Porsche-designed-and-built turbocharged engines dominating Formula One in the mid-1980s.

AS YOU LIKE IT

Other early highlights of the Sonderwunsch programme include a string of seven unique 959s built at the request of Sheikh Abdelaziz bin Khalifa Al Thani, a prominent member of Qatar's royal family. One of the septet was painted gold, features a gold-coloured interior and even incorporates gold-plated engine equipment, including the exhaust. The car was exhibited at the Porsche Museum in Stuttgart as part of Porsche Exclusive's twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations in 2011.

Sonderwunsch may have become be a byword for individuality in the Porsche world, but as the name suggests, Porsche Exclusive's limited-run versions of Zuffenhausen's series production cars are exactly as described: exclusive, albeit produced in short series. That said, introduced in 1997, the 993 Turbo S marked the brand's first step into relatively high-volume production. The model paved the way for

Facing page One of only twenty-six right-hand drive examples of the 993 Turbo S

Above One of the best-looking 911s of them all, enhanced by gorgeous Cobalt Blue paintwork

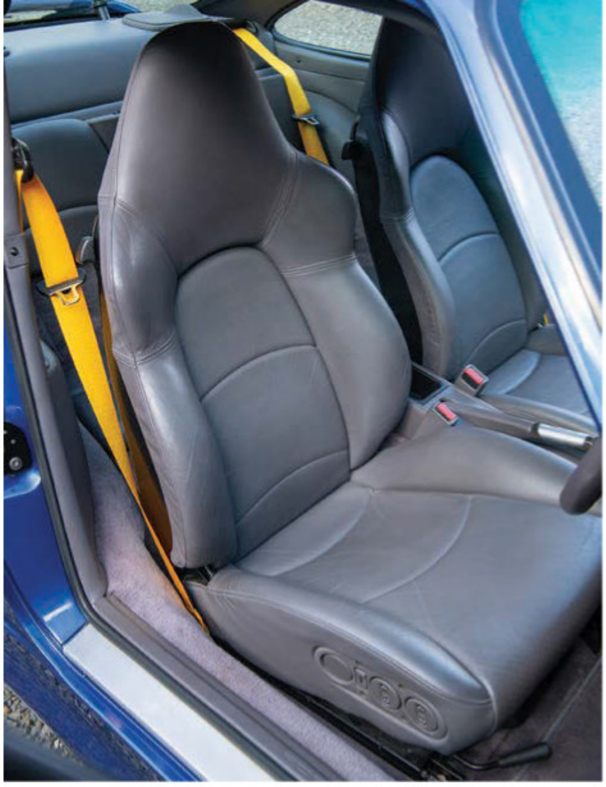
future projects, including the 997 Speedster and 997 Sport Classic, a model so sought-after, it formed the blueprint for the hugely popular 997 Carrera GTS. Don't go thinking the 993 Turbo S is *common*, though. The total number of examples manufactured was, in fact, tiny, coming in at 345 units worldwide. Of those, just twenty-six examples were configured for right-hand drive.

Our Cobalt Blue example is one of the twenty-six. First registered in March 1998, it was acquired by its most recent owner in August 2020. If it looks familiar, then this might be because of publicity surrounding *The Apex Collection*, the owner's fleet of fast four-wheelers sold through online auctioneer, Collecting Cars, in May. Featuring a high number of turbocharged 911s, including a 964 Turbo, 996 Turbo S, 996 GT2, 997 Turbo S, 991 GT2 RS, 991 Turbo S and a 992 Turbo S, the sale fetched a whopping £1,800,000. Bringing together air-cooled icons and modern-day track heroes, the event was a Porsche enthusiast's dream, but the fun didn't stop there — the collection also included a line-up of legendary fast Fords, not least a three-door Sierra RS Cosworth and a Mk4 Escort RS Turbo.

French fancies (a Renault Clio V6 and Renault 5 GT Turbo Raider) also featured, as did a Subaru Impreza P1, a classic Bentley S1 saloon and a Range Rover Classic. It was, however, the event's Stuttgart-crested cars generating the most interest, as demonstrated by our beautiful blue 993's £401,500 sale price.

Let's indulge a little of the car's recent history. In 2013, Porsche Centre Tonbridge subcontracted cosmetic correction to TCW Group Tonbridge. The work included repainting the front end, the rear top panel, bumper edges, both lower wing mouldings, rear inner wheel arches and removal of a dent on the offside rear quarter. Additionally, Porsche Centre Tonbridge staff replaced the front air-conditioning condensers, refurbished all four wheels and replaced the exterior door handle gasket trims, which were beginning to deteriorate through age. Under the seller's watch, regular servicing work has been carried out by Porsche Centre Aberdeen. The odometer reads a criminally low 29,225 miles.

Capable of sprinting from rest to 60mph in a scant 3.6 seconds, romping on to top speed of 184mph, this 993 Turbo S develops 444bhp from its twin-turbocharged 3.6-litre flat-six. Building on the standard 993 Turbo, the Turbo S presents bigger snail-shaped bhp boosters, a recalibrated ECU, an additional oil cooler and, as hinted at, an uprated exhaust. The ride height is fifteen millimetres lower, the dampers are stiffer and an optimised aerodynamic body kit includes intake ducts on the rear quarters, a larger rear spoiler and revised



Above and below Turbo S interior doesn't look vastly different from that of the standard Turbo

brake cooling ducts for the front bumper. Where, though, does the Turbo S — and the standard Turbo, for that matter — sit in the pantheon of 993 production?

Through its many incarnations, the 911 has been updated with an ever-improving raft of technologies. The 964 brought innovations aplenty, including four-wheel drive derived from the 959, an advanced aerodynamic silhouette, a retracting spoiler and a semi-automatic Tiptronic gearbox. Porsche purists voiced mixed opinion, but it was obvious a tech-laden successor to the G-series was required in order for the 911 to avoid the scythe of the Grim Reaper.

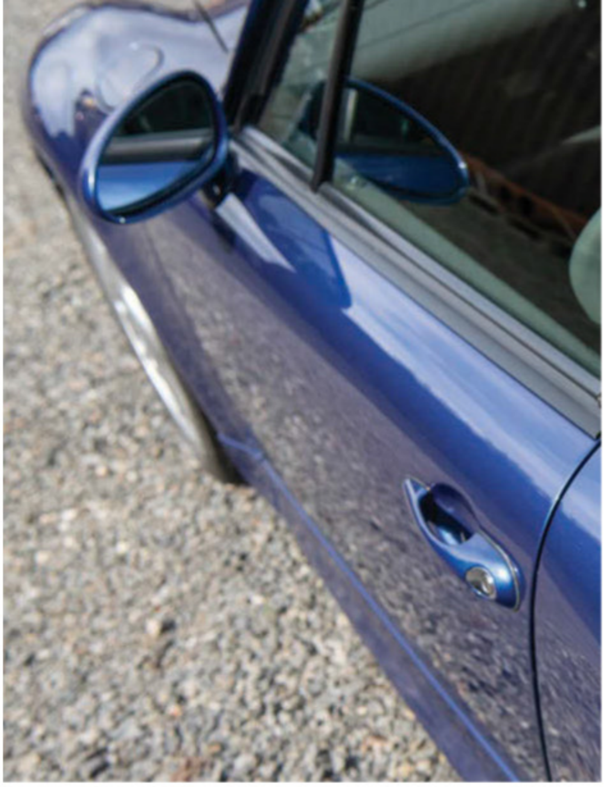
THE COLLECTION ALSO INCLUDED A LINE-UP OF FAST FORDS, NOT LEAST A THREE-DOOR SIERRA RS COSWORTH AND A MK4 ESCORT RS TURBO

On paper, the 964 would be a tough act to follow, but at the Frankfurt Motor Show in 1993 (the 911's thirtieth anniversary year), Porsche unveiled its 'last hurrah' for the air-cooled Neunelfer. The Type 993 was the embodiment of everything the manufacturer had learned from three decades of 911 development work. Arguably one of the prettiest generations of the legendary German sports machine, the "eighty-percent new" 993 was penned by British designer, Tony Hatter, and project managed by Porsche Style department boss, Harm Lagaay. Building on the aerodynamic qualities of the 964, the 911's signature shape remained, although gently modified bumpers, teardrop-shaped door mirrors and pantograph-style windscreen wipers brought the flagship Porsche bang up to date.

The biggest change to the 911's look was the loss of its 'frog eyes'. The 993's sloped headlights had more in common with those of the contemporary 928 and 968 due to being ellipsoid units flush with the front wings. This was intentional, a move intended to promote the idea of a 'family' of Porsche products, rather than individual models with little shared componentry. Inside the car, cabin architecture remained largely unchanged from the 964, albeit with repositioned switchgear.

We may have made it sound as though the 993 was a simple updating of its predecessor, but the newer Porsche featured the most significant changes to the original 911 concept. While the unmistakable glasshouse and silhouette remained, the updated body masked radically altered mechanicals. Increased track sat beneath wider wings. A new subframe-mounted aluminium multi-link rear suspension system brought enhanced handling. The 3.6-litre M64/05 flat-six boasted 272bhp. Loaded with hydraulic lifters and a twin-ignition system, the six-cylinder powerplant transferred 243lb-ft torque to the road through a new six-speed gearbox.

turbo S



Above and facing page Turbo S delivered a the new aerodynamic package, including intakes in the rear quarters and a revised rear spoiler

Optimised use of plastic helped to keep bulk at bay. To this end, bumpers, sill covers, engine bay shrouding and the front luggage area were just some of the 993 parts moulded from plastic, most of it recycled. Further emphasising the model's environmentally friendly(ish) credentials, twin catalytic converters kept emissions low.

Ditching the 'fourby first' approach Porsche adopted when launching the 964, the 993 was initially sold as a two-wheel drive model. Now simply badged *Carrera* (thereby ditching the base 964's unnecessary *2* suffix), the newcomer was well-received by the world's motoring press. Specifically, predictable and safe handling was noted as less likely to catch out the unwary. With comfort, refinement and acceleration also improved, there was little not to like. Riding the wave of approval, Porsche took the opportunity to introduce the 993 Cabriolet at the 1994 Detroit Motor Show.

> **WHILE THE UNMISTAKABLE GLASSHOUSE AND SILHOUETTE REMAINED, THE UPDATED BODY MASKED RADICALLY ALTERED MECHANICALS**

The 993 drop-top promptly accounted for forty percent of 911 sales and brought more tech treats guaranteed to keep sales strong — electric motors lowered or raised the heavily-soundproofed hood in just thirteen seconds (only when the handbrake was applied, mind), while an optional electrically operated windbreak automatically raised when the roof was down, minimising wig-whipping. The part could be removed and stowed if the driver so desired. Perhaps most surprising of all was the fact despite additional chassis strengthening to prevent flex, the weight of the open-top 993 was 1,370kg, exactly the same as the coupe.

A four-speed Tiptronic transmission with an intelligent shift pattern (adapting to the user's driving style) arrived in May 1994, quickly followed by the first competition oriented 993s. The 1,100kg Carrera RS featured a 310bhp, 3.8-litre flat-six and was capable of sprinting to 60mph from rest in just 4.7 seconds. Initially, one hundred examples were built, fifty-five of them spartanly trimmed for road use. Another forty participated in the F1-supporting Carrera Cup series, while the remaining five were built to intoxicating RSR specification. Boosted to a full-fat 350bhp, these mighty motorsport machines frequented the BPR Global Endurance Series.

Also featuring 3.8-litres of firepower, 790 road-legal RS and Clubsport 993s were offered for sale at DM153,350 a pop for the 1996 model year. Simple loop-style door pulls were a throwback to the Rennsports of yore. Lighter glass helped to shed a hundred kilos from Carrera kerb weight. Front corner wings, a fixed rear spoiler and eighteen-inch Cup alloys signalled the Rennsport's intent. Clubsports numbered 227, while fifty-seven racing versions were supplied complete with an intake-equipped adjustable rear wing.

A year earlier, the four-wheel drive Carrera 4 joined the 993 line-up. Available in coupe and Cabriolet guise, this all-pawed 911 made use of a multi-plate viscous coupling clutch, which controlled torque split, a move forward from the electronically controlled clutch-based system of the 964 Carrera 4. Understeer was less prevalent on the newer model, which was only fifty kilograms heavier than the two-wheel drive 993.

The 993 Carrera 4 could be identified by an all-red rear light strip, clear front indicators, titanium-hued calipers and a colour-matched script badge. Locking and automatic differentials kept the model on the straight and narrow. All corners of the motoring press praised the car. Indeed, several correspondents reflected on a more involved drive than they'd experienced from behind the wheel of the 964 Carrera 4.

A further run of 1,200 RS-badged 993s came with the added benefit of Porsche's Varioram induction system. Developed from the 'ramjet' system found on the 928 GTS,

Above There's a 444bhp flat-six in there, somewhere

the variable-length induction trumpets altered depending on engine speed and throttle openings. Meanwhile, at a price of £65,245 (£8,750 more than a Carrera), only thirty RSs were sold new in the UK. A further hundred 350bhp Varioram RSRs were marketed, rewarding your £71,495 spend with a roll cage, a fire extinguisher, six-point safety harnesses, a front strut brace and thinner glass. An optional two-plane rear wing made RSR looks even more fearsome. Unsurprisingly, the model performed well at Le Mans.

PARALLELS WERE DRAWN WITH THE 959, NOT LEAST THANKS TO THE FAMILIARITY OF A TWIN-TURBOCHARGED, FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE POWERTRAIN

The return of the prodigal son was announced at the 1995 Geneva Motor Show — forced induction was back! Packing 408bhp, 398lb-ft torque and a Turbo badge, the 993 was finally the full-blown supercar many knew it could be. Lessons were learned from the 959 project insofar as twin-turbochargers and intercoolers improved throttle response at low engine speeds, while ABS helped to bring ballistic pace to an abrupt halt. In-gear progress from 30mph to 70mph was despatched in 3.4 seconds, a full 2.6 seconds quicker than the Carrera 4.

Topping out at 180mph, the 993 Turbo instantly became Porsche's fastest-ever production car. Highlights included hollow-spoke alloys, twenty-five-millimetre wider bodywork and a fixed rear wing with upturned edges. The 4.5-second dash to 62mph from a standing start was as impressive as the 2.6 seconds it took the Turbo to decelerate to a standstill (all hail the model's 322mm cross-drilled brake discs). For those who fancied an open-topped Turbo, fourteen 993 Turbo Cabriolets were built by Porsche Exclusive.

Varioram became standard for all 993s assembled for the 1996 model year, pushing the base Carrera's power output to 285bhp. Now capable of reaching 171mph, there was more torque in the mid-range. The car scampered to 62mph quicker, too — the benchmark sprint now took 5.4 seconds. Also new for 1996 was a rear under-window spoiler with high-level brake light and rectangular exhaust tips, plus a semi-open-top 911 body style missing from the range since demise of the 964: Targa.

As we will explore in a coming issue of *Classic Porsche*, the 993 Targa thoroughly reinvented the 911 Targa concept by doing away with the model's iconic brushed aluminium roof hoop and removable panel, instead introducing a full-length, electrically operated sliding glass lid, which slid back from above occupant heads to rest behind the rear window. Even though the fully weatherproof panel was made from seven-millimetre-thick laminated and ultraviolet-proofed glass, a helpful blind blotted out the sun's rays when the lid was closed, making the Targa feel more like a coupe. Many 993 enthusiasts justifiably see this as two cars for the price of one.

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COVER STORY Carrera Classic 911 SWB 2.0
INSIDE STORIES 964 Carrera 4, Eisenbrandt, 907, Carrera 3.2 Supersport, 964 Carrera 4, restored 912, 930 vs 991 Turbo, 934 evocation

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AUGUST 2025

COVER STORY Restored 1970 911 E 2.2
INSIDE STORIES Lakewell, 60 years of Targa, EMPI 914 build, RWB 964 Carrera 2, Vic Elford, 911 SC Targa, 917, Pro-9 restomod, 356 Pre-A

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993 AWE LEON GONE UNIQUE TURBO PROJECT
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993 CARRERA ● SCHWIMMWAGEN ● 356 B

JULY 2025

COVER STORY 911 SC RUF CR conversion
INSIDE STORIES Lohner Mixte, 914 reborn, CSF 911 restomod, E&R Classics, 993 Carrera, Schwimmwagen, 356 B, 911 Turbo, 964 Turbo

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911 TURBO ● MITTELMOTOR ● 964 CARRERA 2
917/30 ● RETRO WORKS 993 GTR 3.8 ● 356 B

MAY-JUNE 2025

COVER STORY 911 S/T Targa Florio star
INSIDE STORIES Carrera 3.2 Safari, 356 B, 917/30, Mittlemotor profile, 964 Carrera 2, Retro Works 993 GTR 3.8, Erwin Komenda

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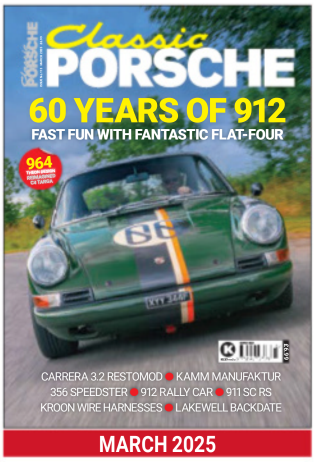
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COVER STORY Celebrating 60 years of 912
INSIDE STORIES Renn Works Carrera 3.2, KAMM Manufaktur, Lakewell Targa backdate, Kroon Wire Harnesses, 356 Speedster, 912 EV

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CRAYFORD 914 ● HANS HERRMANN ● BUYING 911 SC
ROAD & RACE RESTORATIONS ● NORBERT SINGER

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2025

COVER STORY Carrera Classic 911 race car
INSIDE STORIES Road & Race Restorations, 356 Speedster, Anglo American Oil Company, Norbert Singer, 356 Speedster, Crayford 914

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AGENT ORANGE
AWARD-WINNING 911 SC FINISHED IN GT3 PAINTWORK BREAKS COVER
904 ANNIVERSARY 60 YEARS YOUNG
356 SUPER 90 OUTLAW ● 916 EVOCATION
BRANITZKI AND BOHN ● SIX YEARS AT GMÜND
993 CARRERA ● 718 W-RS ● 356 CARRERA 2

DECEMBER 2024

COVER STORY GT3-coloured 911 SC build
INSIDE STORIES 356 Super 90, 993 Carrera, 718 W-RS, 356 Carrera 2, Branitzki and Bohn, Six Years at Gmünd, 916 evocation, 904 at 60

Classic PORSCHE
TWO-TONE 911
READER'S 3.5-LITRE DIY BUILD CARRIED OUT FROM HIS HOME GARAGE
935 KREMER K3 LE MANS WINNER
40 YEARS OF CARRERA 3.2 ● 356 A T2 SPEEDSTER
STEVE MCQUEEN ● HEUER MONACO ● IROC REPLICA
SWB 911 S ● CARRERA CLASSIC ● SPORTCLASSE

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Above Rubystone Red remains one of the boldest shades in Porsche colour catalogue and was shared between the 964 RS and 944 S2

Lagaay proclaimed the 993 Targa to be "a wonderfully elegant solution" retaining the 911's iconic side profile, whilst improving and maintaining overall torsional rigidity. The 285bhp Varioram-fed 3.6-litre flat-six powered the £64,250 model, a 993 notable for its two-piece seventeen-inch wheels. Meanwhile, the 993 Carrera 4S was essentially a Carrera 4 with the Turbo's wider body, sans rear spoiler. Wings grew to thirty-millimetres in order to cover eighteen-inch Turbo-style wheels. Lowered by the same twenty millimetres as its turbocharged sibling, the Carrera 4S also shared the same bigger brakes and limited-slip differential. With a price tag of £74,795, the model was £12,300 more expensive than the Carrera 4, but not as fast as the Turbo and less 'pure' than the two-wheel drive Carrera. Many reckoned the 4S was caught between a rock and a hard place, but such mutterings didn't stop 2,485 enthusiastic buyers from driving the model out of main dealer showrooms.

VARIETY PACK

The Carrera S (curiously absent from the later 996-generation 911 range) followed the same *wide body with a normally aspirated flat-six* formula as the Carrera 4S, but in two-wheel drive configuration. An in-car telephone was now part of the home market's standard kit list. Eight models strong, the 993 range proved to all of Porsche's critics the 911 was in rude health. Proving the point, a milestone was soon reached: the one millionth Porsche rolled off the production line on 15th July 1996, signalling the company's return to profit. This special jubilee car (a 993, of course), was presented to Baden-Wurttemberg's autobahn police patrol. The best, though, was yet to come.

185mph afforded the 993 Turbo S plenty of swagger. Parallels were drawn with the 959, not least thanks to near identical power and the familiarity of a twin-turbocharged, four-wheel drive powertrain. Incidentally, the Turbo S was last of the air-cooled 911 Turbos. In total, 5,978 993s featuring forced induction were built during a three-year production cycle. The final 993 left Zuffenhausen on 31st March 1998, signalling the end of the line for air-cooled 911s. Revered ever since, the 993 is recognised for playing a hugely important role in the 911 story. Blisteringly fast in Turbo specification, many marque enthusiasts see the model as the most pleasing incarnation of the 911, primarily thanks to a wide range of trim options, steadfast reliability and the potential for racing thrills at the track.

If only there were enough turbocharged 993s to go around. We'll take a Turbo S. Make it two. Then again, if £401,500 is anything to go by, perhaps we need a lie down instead? **CP**

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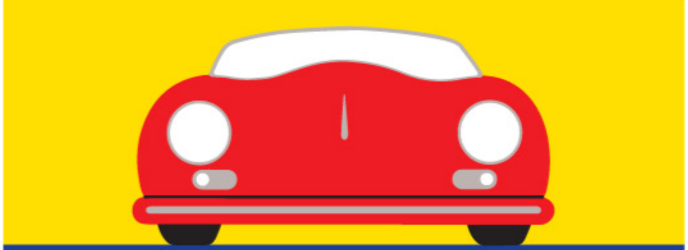

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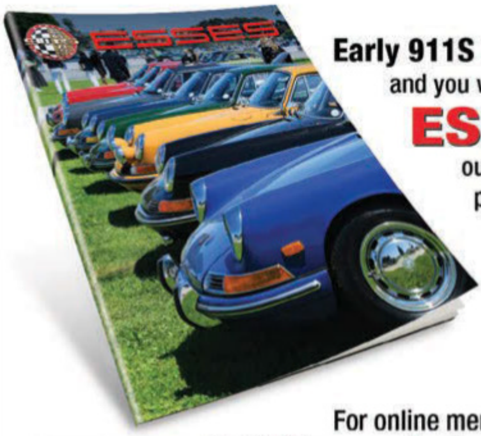

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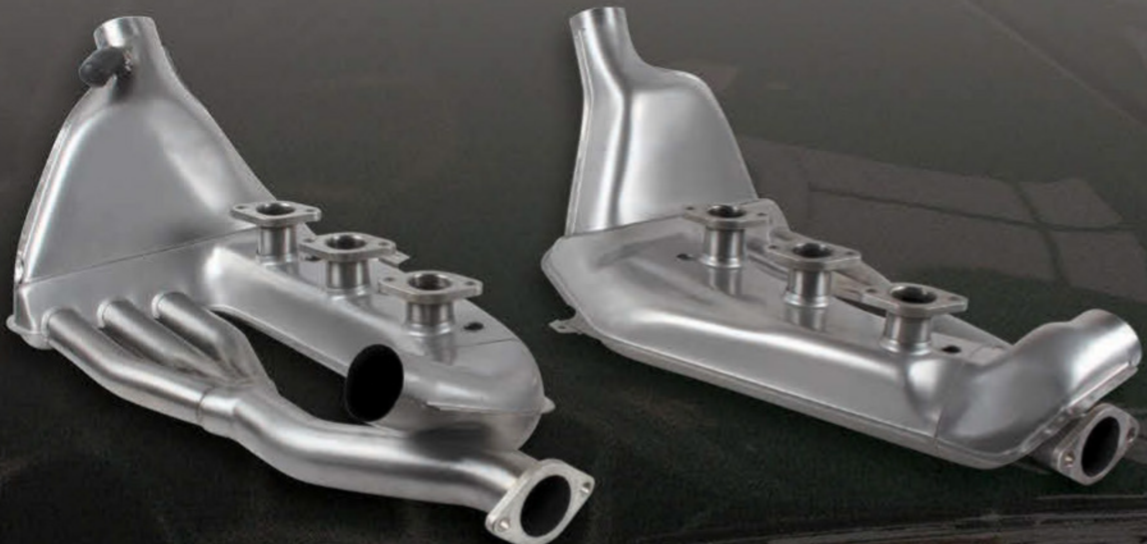
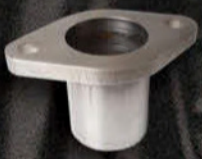
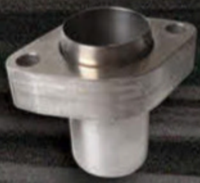
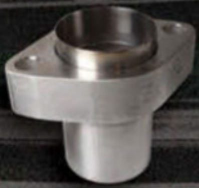
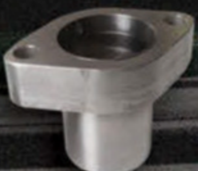
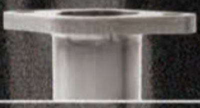
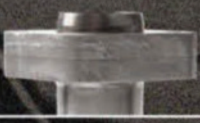
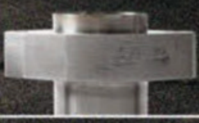
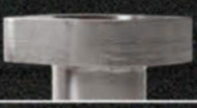


Illustration: Heat exchanger 2.0-2.4, Ø38mm - Ref no. 91.911SSI // JP no. 1623104910

The SSi heat exchanger - for replacement or conversion to free flow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